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A Peace of the Puzzle

The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Liberia

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A Peace of the Puzzle:
The Disarmament, Demobilisation
and Reintegration of Child Soldiers
in Liberia

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War Studies Department

Abstract

This thesis uses the prism of Liberia's post-conflict experience to explore the centrality of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of children to the success of peacebuilding efforts. Until recently, the concept and process of child DDR has either been completely ignored, subsumed as part of adult processes or has been treated by academics, policymakers and international organisations as a peripheral issue in attempts to consolidate peace and security. This thesis seeks to fill this crucial gap in the literature by analysing each step of the DDR programme in Liberia, carefully isolating child-specific causalities, interventions and implications from the broader peacebuilding processes. Based on this disaggregation, it argues that addressing the needs of child soldiers through a comprehensive and dedicated child-specific DDR programme has not only been vital to the achievement of short, medium term, and long-term peacebuilding objectives in Liberia, but should also be considered an essential "peace" of the puzzle in other pertinent post-conflict situations.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
MAP OF LIBERIA.....	6
ACRONYM LIST.....	7
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	8
Peacebuilding.....	12
DDR.....	14
Children and Armed Conflict.....	18
Liberia	24
Methodology.....	27
Structure	29
CHAPTER 2 – CHILDREN AND WAR	32
What is a child?.....	33
What is a Child Soldier.....	35
The Scope of the Issue.....	36
The New Face of War.....	42
Impact of War on Children	44
Why Child Soldiers Are Used	46
Recruitment Methods.....	46
The Experience of Child Soldiers.....	51
The Girl Soldier	54
The Implications of Child Soldiers on War.....	57
The International Response to Child Soldiering.....	57
Conclusion	61
CHAPTER 3 – WAR AND PEACE IN LIBERIA	62
Liberia’s exclusionary history	63
Doe’s Coup.....	64
Outbreak of War.....	67
Enter ECOWAS.....	68
A Push for Peace	73
The Civil War Re-Starts.....	81
Another Push for Peace	82
Children and War in Liberia.....	85
Children as Perpetrators of War	87
Methods of Child Recruitment.....	88
Profile of a Liberian Child Soldier	90
The Treatment of Child Soldiers	91
Outfits and Weapons used by Child Soldiers.....	93
Girl Soldiers.....	95
Conclusion	96
CHAPTER 4 – PEACEBUILDING, DDR AND CHILDREN	97
Peacebuilding in Action	103
Security Dimension	104
Governance and Political Dimension	105
Social, Economic and Environmental Dimension.....	107
Peacebuilding in Liberia.....	110
The Strategic Framework for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration ..	111
Conclusion	127

CHAPTER 5 – DISARMAMENT IN LIBERIA	129
The Disarmament Process.....	131
Camp Scheffelin.....	131
Preparation for resumption of DDR	134
Restart of Disarmament Process.....	136
The Child Disarmament Process.....	138
Structural Challenges.....	141
Operational challenges.....	147
Conclusion	157
CHAPTER 6 - DEMOBILISATION IN LIBERIA.....	160
The Demobilisation Process	162
Phase I: Camp Scheffelin	163
Phase II & III.....	165
The Adult Demobilisation Process	167
The Child Demobilisation Process.....	173
Analysing the Child Demobilisation Process.....	181
Successes.....	185
Shortcomings	188
Conclusion	194
CHAPTER 7 – REINTEGRATION IN LIBERIA	197
Context	198
The Adult Reintegration Process.....	200
Options for Reintegrating Adults	202
Analysing the Adult Reintegration Process	206
The Child Reintegration Process.....	212
Options for Reintegrating Children.....	214
Analysing the Child Reintegration Process	218
Successes.....	222
Shortcomings	226
Conclusion	231
CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION	236
Main Lessons	236
Planning and Implementation	236
Funding and Costs	242
Achievement of Objectives and Impact	244
Differences between Child and Adult DDR.....	246
Linkages between Child and Adult DDR.....	248
Wider Implications.....	251
Perspective	254
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES	258

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I am a firm believer that life's lessons can come from a variety of people and places, especially when you least expect it. What an incredible journey it has been thus far – se los agradezco mucho!

Map of Liberia



Acronym List

AU	African Union Commission
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
CAFF	Children Associated with Fighting Forces
CEIP	Community Education Investment Programme
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra, Ghana 13 August 2003
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CTP	Cape Town Principles
CWC	Child Welfare Committees
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (2003)
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GOL	Government of Liberia
ICC	Interim Care Centre
ICGL	International Contact Group for Liberia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFI	International Finance Institution
JIU	Joint Implementation Unit
LPC	Liberia Peace Council
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MILOBS	United Nations Mission in Liberia Military Observers
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NCDDRR	National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
NFI	Non Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFL	National Patriotic Party of Liberia
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
NTLA	National Transitional Legislative Assembly
OAU	Organisation of African States, now the African Union
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP	The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
PDO	Pre-Discharge Orientation
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia
SRSG-CAAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TSA	Transitional Safety Allowance
TWP	True Whig Party
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Emergency Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WFP	World Food Programme

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis uses the prism of Liberia's post-conflict experience to explore the centrality of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of children to the success of peacebuilding efforts. Until recently, the concept and process of child DDR has either been completely ignored, subsumed as part of adult processes or has been treated by academics, policymakers and international organisations as a peripheral issue in attempts to consolidate peace and security. This thesis seeks to fill this crucial gap in the literature by analysing each step of the DDR programme in Liberia, carefully isolating child-specific causalities, interventions and implications from the broader peacebuilding processes. Based on this disaggregation, it argues that addressing the needs of child soldiers through a comprehensive and dedicated child-specific DDR programme has not only been vital to the achievement of short, medium term, and long-term peacebuilding objectives in Liberia, but should also be considered an essential piece of the puzzle in other pertinent post-conflict situations.

Liberia has been called 'the classic example of the rationale behind using children as an alternate military labour source' and is a prime case for examining post-conflict reconstruction and child interventions.¹ The persistent and pervasive use of child soldiers by all factions made the war in Liberia (1989-2003) easier to start, but also made it harder to bring to a close.² Children provided necessary manpower and were used as frontline soldiers, porters, sex slaves and auxiliary support. This phenomenon was extensively documented by the international media with constant images of machine-gun tooting children wreaking havoc in the streets of Monrovia and in the country's hinterland. With an estimated 15,000 to 21,000 children recruited as soldiers in the later stages of the conflict (1999-2003) Liberia's war quickly became synonymous with the use of child

¹ P.W Singer, *Children at War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 31.

² Ibid., 94.

soldiers.³ Throughout the war, until 2003, there were several unsuccessful attempts at disarming, demobilising and reintegrating both adult and child soldiers. These failed attempts at DDR directly contributed to the prolongation, continuation and resurgence of the conflict (in 1999). These failings further accentuated the need to effectively address children's DDR as part of the peacebuilding processes to break the conflict chain.

The Liberian war claimed the lives of 250,000 people, displaced approximately 1.25 million people and touched virtually every Liberian citizen's life either directly or indirectly. In 2003 the war came to an end through political negotiations amongst the warring factions under intense sub-regional and international political pressure.⁴ The signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (13 August 2003) formally ended the war, and provided a framework for transitioning the country out of war. Intended to address the root causes of the Liberian conflict the peace agreement outlined many short- and medium-term peacebuilding initiatives such as the establishment of several commissions to spearhead efforts on governance reform, anti-corruption, human rights and reconciliation. Apart from the call for immediate cessation of hostilities, the peace agreement outlined the establishment of a power-sharing transitional government to run the country for a period of approximately two years until multiparty elections could be held and a democratically elected government inaugurated. It called for the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, mandated with the responsibility of maintaining peace and security in Liberia. A comprehensive DDR programme was called for, as was the creation of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation and Reintegration intended to oversee and guide the DDR process from a national perspective. DDR was seen as an integral peacebuilding component necessary for the enabling of other intervention in support of the consolidation of sustainable peace and security. The peace agreement was only the second in history (Sierra Leone was the first) to explicitly acknowledge the significance of the involvement of child soldiers in the war and called for the implementation of child specific DDR.

This thesis looks at two different categories of questions. The first directly relate to the context-specific DDR process in Liberia, including the extent to which the design of the DDR programme addressed the needs of adult and child combatants and the extent to

³ Amnesty International, *Liberia: The Promises of Peace for 21,000 Child Soldiers* (New York: Amnesty International, 2004), AI Index: AFR 34/006/2004.

⁴ Singer, 56.

which DDR and child DDR specifically impacted peacebuilding strategies. The second category of questions addresses the overall characteristics of child DDR, including what makes child DDR different from adult DDR, and why it is important; whether DDR is a necessary component in peacebuilding and whether child DDR solves the problem it seeks to fix. This thesis generates further debate and discussion on the role of child DDR in peacebuilding, its usefulness, documents the process and thus addresses the notable gap in the academic literature on peacebuilding that originally motivated this study.

By addressing these questions, the thesis comes to two main conclusions with regard to the centrality of child DDR to peacebuilding. First, Liberia's adult DDR programme achieved most of its objectives despite significant design flaws and implementation gaps; DDR was a critical contribution to peacebuilding and the consolidation of peace and security. It was clear that without a DDR programme, even a flawed one, the security and political situation would not have improved. After a turbulent start to the DDR process in December 2003, which saw rioting, looting and a deterioration of an already fragile state of security, the DDR programme was suspended until April 2004 to allow for further planning and necessary preparations. Once the programme resumed, from a security perspective, both the adult and child DDR processes ran more smoothly. Despite the disarmament process yielding a low weapons-to-combatant-ratio, the DDR programme still had the intended effect of providing a sense of security and was able to incentivise the combatants to renounce violence. This was of course supported by a large peacekeeping presence responsible for monitoring and enforcing the peace agreement. Although the credibility of the DDR programme was severely questioned as a result of the lax implementation of the entry criteria and the inflated number of participants (triple the original estimate), this did not necessarily render the DDR programme ineffective. And in spite of severe delays in providing reintegration benefits the situation remained manageable and as of December 2010, has not deteriorated or slid back into conflict. In that sense, the DDR programme served its purpose and enabled other peacebuilding initiatives to progress.

Second, despite the DDR programme suffering from numerous structural and operational challenges that both slowed down the process and complicated its implementation, the child DDR programme was successful in delivering its various components and achieved many of its objectives. Although it is clear that many children were not able to access the DDR programme, a total of 10,963 took advantage of the

DDR programme and its benefits.⁵ Children spent up to twelve weeks in interim care centres where they received life-skills, basic education (for numeracy and literacy) and health services. Ninety-eight percent of all former child combatants were reunited with their families in Liberia or provided with alternative living arrangements; the other two percent were repatriated to their countries of origin and reunited with their families there. Formal education was the only reintegration option for children younger than fourteen years of age, while older children were given the option of pursuing skills training or formal education. All things considered, the child DDR process delivered most of its objectives: children were discharged from the ranks of the fighting factions, they went through the demobilisation programme, they received goods as well as benefited from services assisting in their social and economic reintegration, while the child protection capacities of both government and local communities' were enhanced and improved. Had the children not been included in the DDR programme, they may have posed an immediate as well as a long-term threat to security.

Despite a growing body of literature focussed on peacebuilding, children and war, and Liberia, little systematic attention has been given to the specific role of child DDR in peacebuilding. This thesis makes a contribution by closing a yawning gap in current literature by describing, assessing and analysing the centrality and consequences of the Liberian child DDR process. This thesis relies heavily on previously unavailable documentation, dozens of semi-structured and unstructured interviews and eight months of fieldwork in Liberia. In order to make peacebuilding interventions more effective in the future policymakers and scholars have called for further academic research to gain a better understanding of the centrality of children's involvement in peacebuilding initiatives and in DDR especially.⁶ That is what this thesis aims to do. Improving policymakers and practitioners' understanding of how best to address and remedy the child soldiers issue has practical implications for the future implementation of child DDR programmes both in Africa and beyond.⁷ This thesis is to be understood in the context of peacebuilding, DDR, children and war and Liberia – all of which are covered in subsequent chapters.

⁵ NCDDRR, "DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2, & 3," (Monrovia: NCDDRR, 16 January 2005).

⁶ Singer, X.

⁷ Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4.

Peacebuilding

Over the past two decades the thinking, approach and policies regarding the resolution of armed conflict within the United Nations' (UN) system and international finance institutions (IFIs) has changed considerably. The UN's involvement in the maintenance of peace and security through peacekeeping as well as peacebuilding interventions is being relied upon in ways that were not politically possible during the Cold War. In the early 1990s, no longer hindered by Cold War mentalities such as the impenetrability of sovereignty, which previously prevented the deployment of peacekeeping missions and the interference in wars that were seen to be domestic or national issues, the UN Security Council's understanding of what constituted threats to international peace was broadened. The notion of international peace and security was broadened to not only include armed conflicts, but also economic, social, humanitarian and ecological factors both external and internal to states.⁸ The concept of sovereignty has gradually shifted, albeit selectively, towards the notion that the UN has the responsibility to get involved when threats to international peace and security arise.⁹ These combined factors contributed to the increased use and deployment of UN peacekeeping missions as a response to the outbreak and, in some cases, the continuation of wars throughout the world.

The concept of peacebuilding emerged in 1992, as the UN got more involved in peacekeeping and began exploring ways to strengthen its capacities and improve its preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping capacities.¹⁰ Seen as an integral part of the UN's mandate under the Charter, peacebuilding was defined as a process of identifying and supporting structures, which tends to strengthen peace in order to avoid conflict or the recurrence of conflict and foster a sustainable environment so that economic and social development can prosper.¹¹ Peacebuilding was seen to be relevant not only in a post-conflict environment, but as a preventative tool as well.¹² Post-conflict peacebuilding focussed on addressing the root causes, severe deficits and contributing factors of the conflict. These can generally be categorised in three mutually reinforcing

⁸ United Nations, "Note by the President of the Security Council: Broadening Security " (New York: United Nations, 31 January 1992), 3.

⁹ Challenges and Change High-Level Panel on Threats, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (New York: United Nations, 2005).

¹⁰ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace," (New York: United Nations, 17 June 1992).

¹¹ Ibid., para 21, 55-57.

¹² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Peacebuilding Overview* (OECD, 2005), 1; United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," (New York: United Nations, 20 February 2001); United Nations, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," (August 2000).

dimensions relating to 1) security; 2) governance and political; and 3) social, economic and environmental issues.¹³ However, policymakers recognised that post-conflict peacebuilding, in comparison to preventative peacebuilding, has different immediate needs and a unique set of challenges that have arisen as a consequence of conflict.¹⁴ Given that in 2003 Liberia was ravished by war it is the application of post-conflict peacebuilding that is of most interest to this thesis.

In post-conflict peacebuilding, the security is often exacerbated as a result of a conflict's legacy. In this context, the concept of security is in a broad sense, to incorporate both the state and the individual. Successfully coping with and addressing the presence of weapons as well as armaments, and the needs of the combatants are of the utmost importance to the consolidation of peace and security. Peacebuilding interventions attempt to do this in part through implementation of security sector reform or transformation and DDR programmes.

Although there are many grievances that contribute to or trigger war, the political situation is often a key factor.¹⁵ Whether these grievances are a result of weak, corrupt, illegitimate or discriminatory governments the impact and subsequent damage of such abuse can and is often devastating. This was the case in Liberia. Peacebuilding aims to address these deficits through supporting governance reform; improving state institutions, capacities and authority; addressing transitional justice issues; and strengthening civil society.¹⁶

Inequality, social and economic marginalisation and poverty are common contributing factors of war.¹⁷ The social, economic and environmental dimensions of peacebuilding attempts address these potential root causes of conflict to empower the population by repatriating and reintegrating refugees and internally displaced persons; supporting short-term economic or social projects; and supporting efforts for long-term sustainable development.¹⁸

¹³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1-4.

¹⁴ Heiner Hänggi, "Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction " in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi(Geneva: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004), 3-16.

¹⁵ Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance* (Boulder Lynne Rienner, 2000); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 3.

¹⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 3.

¹⁷ David Keen, "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence " in *Greed and Grievance* ed. Mats Berdal and David M. Malone(Boulder Lynne Rienner, 2000), 25-31.

¹⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 3.

Although the components of peacebuilding are by no means new, the field of peacebuilding is (as currently defined) and has received much attention by academics and policymakers alike. Over the years, many questions have been asked about the underlying assumptions around peacebuilding interventions and in doing so have helped clearly establish links between security and development. Being critical of the implementation of peacebuilding, its utility and effectiveness has not only contributed to a greater understanding of the concept itself, but also ways to improve it both theoretically and in practice.¹⁹ This body of literature has helped to develop and hone the UN's approach to peacebuilding at a crucial time. Although many authors agree that addressing the issues of child soldiering is important, the issue seldom receives more than tangential attention. The DDR of soldiers is one of the integral means of trying to address some of these complex peacebuilding issues.

DDR

The nature of modern war in Africa has shifted away from inter-state wars fought by soldiers to intra-state or civil wars, fought mostly by mobilised civilians, including children, using small and light weapons.²⁰ Although the question of what to do with soldiers after war is by no means a new concern, the prevalence of wars and use of non-professional armies around the developing world and the evolving concept of peacebuilding re-focused attention on the issue. The relationship between peacebuilding and DDR is a symbiotic one and 'although a sustainable recovery after war cannot be achieved without a successful DDR process, conversely, without a successful peacebuilding process the viability of a DDR process would, in general, be questionable.'²¹

¹⁹ Richard Caplan, *International Governance of War-Torn Territories : Rule and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Thomas F. Keating and W. Andy Knight, eds., *Building Sustainable Peace* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004); Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke, "Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (2005); Anthony F. Lang, *Just Intervention* Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003); Paris; Michael Pugh, *The UN, Peace, and Force* Cass Series on Peacekeeping (London Frank Cass, 1997); Michael Pugh, ed. *Regeneration of War-Torn Societies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Rolf Schwarz, "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: The Challenges of Security, Welfare and Representation," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (2005).

²⁰ Michael Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), 18-23.

²¹ Mark Knight and Alpaslan Özerdem, "Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 4 (2004): 501.

One of the first steps in the peacebuilding process is establishing a secure environment.²² The thinking behind DDR programmes is that in the presence of weapons and idle soldiers, peace and security cannot improve. Thus the consolidation of peace is impossible without addressing these issues. DDR programmes aim to not only remove weapons from circulation, but also to break down the command structure, equip the ex-combatants with either education or skills that would assist them in supporting themselves and their families. DDR benefits provide an incentive, for instance through training and allowances, to resist resorting to the use of violence and possibly destabilising a fragile peace.²³ DDR is seen as an essential component of the peacebuilding process crucially enabling and allowing for the implementation of other complementary peacebuilding activities and relief efforts.²⁴

The UN acknowledged that the DDR of combatants 'has repeatedly proved to be vital to stabilizing a post-conflict situation; to reducing the likelihood of renewed violence, either because of relapse into war or outbreaks of banditry; and to facilitating a society's transition from conflict to normalcy and development.'²⁵ Since the mid-1990s it has been incorporated as standard procedure in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions when and where appropriate.²⁶ This is illustrated by the fact that between 1992-6 there were thirty-six DDR processes identified in 29 countries, two-thirds of which were in Africa.²⁷ Moreover, between 2000 and 2006, DDR was part of the mandate of six UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Liberia (UNMIL), Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Burundi (ONUB), Haiti (MINUSTAH) and Sudan (UNMIS).²⁸ Pre-2003, Liberia alone had attempted to implement three DDR programmes during its fourteen-year conflict.

Briefly put, the DDR process is a set of sequential phases and often overlapping events with short, medium and long term goals. For the purpose of this thesis, the UN

²² Mats Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), 24.

²³ Heiner Hänggi, "Approaching Peacebuilding from a Security Governance Perspective" in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (Geneva: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004), 13.

²⁴ Keating and Knight, eds., XLIV-XLV.

²⁵ United Nations, "The Role of UN Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration" (New York: United Nations, 11 February 2000), 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

²⁷ Nicole Ball and Dylan Hendrickson, *Review of International Financing Arrangements for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration* (Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, 2005), para 6.

²⁸ United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration," (New York: 2 March 2006), 2.

definition of DDR will be used, given that the UN was responsible for Liberia's DDR programme:

Disarmament is the 'collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including their safe storage and their final disposition, which may entail their destruction.'²⁹

Demobilisation 'refers to the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life. It generally entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge, and transportation to their home [or chosen] communities.'³⁰

Reintegration 'refers to the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training, and job- and income- generating projects.'³¹

The goals of DDR have been covered extensively in literature.³² Although DDR's goals can be seen as relatively straightforward the implementation of DDR programmes are usually complex. In the short term, DDR is aimed at contributing to the restoration of security and stability through the de-militarization of the warring factions, benefiting society as a whole. It is meant not only to reduce or eliminate the number of arms floating around, but also to allow the deployment of international peacekeepers to provide a secure environment allowing relief, humanitarian, and ultimately development workers to operate. In the medium and long term, coupled with broader development and governance assistance, DDR is aimed at maintaining a secure environment and assisting the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants in a peaceful society. DDR is therefore at the very nexus of security and development. Although the DD components are normally carried out by military or peacekeepers and are security-focused processes, their success or failure have direct implications on the consolidation of peace and development more generally. And conversely, the developmental or socio-economic process of reintegration has direct implications to security. If the ex-combatants (who are potential peace spoilers) are left unsatisfied or if their socio-economic needs are not sufficiently met, insecurity may persist. Although successful

²⁹ United Nations, "The Role of UN Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration ", 2.

³⁰ Ibid., 2.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ball and Hendrickson; Berdal, 24-76; Kees Kingma, "Demobilisation of Combatants after Civil Wars in Africa and Their Reintegration into Civilian Life," *Policy Sciences* 30, no. (1997): 158-163; Sarah Meek and Mark Malan, *Identifying Lesson from DDR Experiences in Africa* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, October 2004).

DDR depends on a number of factors, their implementation does not guarantee overall success or consolidation of sustainable peace. Successful DDR depends on a number of factors such as good planning and implementation, sufficient funding, providing basic provisions ex-combatants, strong political will and a secure environment. However, these factors do not guarantee success or the successful consolidation of sustainable peace.³³ Moreover, if DDR is to succeed it needs to be situated within a more holistic and better-coordinated peacebuilding approach from all actors including participants, donors and implementation agencies.³⁴

Security sector reform (SSR), of which DDR is a part of, is another means of addressing the security deficits in post-conflict situations. Like DDR, SSR which has also received much attention from policymakers and scholars, is an evolving concept and is an equally contested topic. Scholars have aptly addressed the concept, its rationale, objectives, its challenges and opportunities, how best it should be implemented and have provided useful theoretical frameworks, including identifying gaps between theory and practice.³⁵ SSR generally refers to the process of reforming the security agents (such as the armed forces, police, intelligence and security services, non-state actors, as well as oversight bodies such as the executive, legislature, judiciary and relevant ministries) 'act in accordance to the priorities of the state, under democratic principles and a sound legislative framework, with adequate capacity and resources and an acceptable degree of civilian oversight.'³⁶ Collectively, academics, policymakers and practitioners including institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have provided useful guidance and best practices while establishing the SSR agenda as a compelling, necessary and complex endeavour within the peacebuilding

³³ Ball and Hendrickson; Berdal, 24-76; Kingma: 158-163; Meek and Malan.

³⁴ Berdal, 5-6.

³⁵ Nicole Ball, "Good Practices in Security Sector Reform " in *Security Sector Reform* ed. Herbert Wulf (Bonn: Bonn International Centre for Conversion, 2000); Nicole Ball and Kayode Fayemi, *Security Sector Governance: A Handbook* (Lagos: Centre for Democracy & Development and Centre for International Policy, 2004); Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi, eds., *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* (Geneva: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004); Jane Chanaa, *Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects* Adelphi Paper 344 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002); Adedeji Ebo, "Security Sector Reform as an Instrument of Sub-Regional Transformation in West Africa " in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (Geneva: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004); Adedeji Ebo, *The Challenges and Opportunities of Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Liberia* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2005); 'Koyode Fayemi, "Governing Insecurity in Post-Conflict States: The Case of Sierra Leone and Liberia " in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (Geneva: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004); Hänggi, "Approaching Peacebuilding."; Hänggi, "Conceptualising Security."; Dylan Hendrickson, *A Review of Security Sector Reform* (London: The Conflict, Security & Development Group at the Centre for Defense Studies, King's College London, September 1999).

³⁶ Cranfield University Centre for Security Sector Management, "Glossary" <http://www.ssronline.org/glossary.cfm?type=2&value=S> (accessed 15 October 2010).

paradigm.³⁷ The UN's approach to peacebuilding not only acknowledges the importance of SSR, but has also developed policies and programmes to support its implementation.³⁸

With regard to the presence and relevance of children, scholars such as Berdal, Knight and Özerdem simply acknowledge that children have special needs in post-conflict environments and emphasise the importance of incorporating children into DDR processes where appropriate. However even though children have the potential to derail or unravel fragile peace processes, they have only been tangential to the analysis of DDR processes. For instance, although Berdal states that 'experience since 1989 also shows that the requirements of other war-affected groups during demobilisation and reintegration need special consideration' no further analysis is offered.³⁹ Although there has been some analysis on child DDR in other countries, there has been little focus specifically on Liberia.⁴⁰ This dearth in the literature and lack of focus on children during peace processes strengthens the need for and relevance of this dissertation.

Children and Armed Conflict

As the notion of security broadened, international recognition and attention has increased regarding the use of child soldiers in wars across the developing world. Although not a new phenomenon by any means, as the number of internal conflicts increased after the end of the Cold War, so did the UN's and many of its members' interest in child soldiers. Children and war, as a distinct field, is relatively new within academia and policy-making. In fact, the articulation of children's rights separate from human or adult rights only emerged in 1989 with the codification of the Convention on the Rights of a Child.⁴¹ Starting in 1994, spearheaded by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and later by the United Nations, the issue of child soldiering caught the attention, scrutiny and moral condemnation of the world. It was quickly acknowledged by policymakers, scholars and media that children were now a common feature in armed conflict as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, opportunism, changing social norms, and increased instability. Although Africa, as the

³⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Development Assistance Committee Handbook on Security System Reform* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007).

³⁸ Andy Knight, "Linking DDR and SSR in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Africa: An Overview," *African Journal of Political Science and International relations* 4, no. 1 (2009): 33-37.

³⁹ Berdal, 48.

⁴⁰ Beth Verhey, *Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing and Reintegrating* (World Bank, 2001).

⁴¹ United Nations, "Convention on the Rights of the Child " (New York: United Nations, 20 November 1989).

location of many wars, is at the epicentre of the phenomenon, the issue is of global concern. In 2001, the use of child soldiers had been documented in thirty-six conflict countries while over eighty-five nations have recruited under-age soldiers.⁴² Although the precise number is difficult to ascertain, the UN has estimated that approximately 300,000 child soldiers are mobilised around the world at any time.⁴³ For the purpose of this study and based on the Cape Town Principles, a child soldier is 'any person under eighteen years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely family members. Girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage are included in this definition. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.'⁴⁴

As recognition of the use of children as soldiers increased, the UN and many member states began mounting its response. In 1996, the UN took up the issue by dedicating an office to learn more about the impact of armed conflict on children, including the child soldiering issue. In 1999, the UN Security Council placed the issue of the protection and security of children affected by armed conflict on its annual agenda affirming that child soldiering was a concern to international peace and security. Since these early engagements, there has been a growing recognition that more must be done to ameliorate the impact war has on children, including their recruitment as soldiers. The Liberian civil war was fought as the world came to better understand the issue, and as it came to grips with the reality and began developing its response to the phenomenon of child soldiering.

Early literature, notably two contributions from Cohn and Goodwin-Gill and Brett, McCallin and O'Shea, set a useful foundation for others to build upon.⁴⁵ Prior to Cohn and Goodwin-Gill's contribution, there was limited understanding on children and war and a significant gap in the literature. In 1994, they provided the first comprehensive examination of the child soldier phenomenon including why children participate in war, the conditions in which they are recruited into armed forces, the consequences of their

⁴² Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report on Child Soldiers* (London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001), 10.

⁴³ UNICEF, "Fact Sheet: Child Soldiers" <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/childsoldiers.pdf> (accessed 19 October 2010).

⁴⁴ UNICEF, "Cape Town Principles and Best Practices," (Cape Town, South Africa: 1997).

⁴⁵ Rachel Brett, Margaret McCallin, and Rhone O'Shea, *Children: The Invisible Soldiers* (New York: Quaker UN Office (Geneva), International Catholic Child Bureau on behalf of the Child Soldiers Research Project, 1996); Ilene Cohn and Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

involvement in armed conflict, the responses of their participation and what mechanisms exist to prevent the involvement of children in armed conflict.⁴⁶ They claimed that children, like adults, are motivated to join wars by the root causes of conflicts and other 'social, economic and political issues defining their lives.'⁴⁷ In this preliminary study the authors acknowledge that they are responding to the dearth of information in the field, and state that 'researchers need to evaluate seriously the effectiveness of existing programme models, and whether they might be replicated in other contexts.'⁴⁸

Brett, McCallin and O'Shea assert that children are invisible soldiers and are often further marginalised during peace processes. Moreover, a compelling case was made that until the presence of child soldiers is explicitly acknowledged amongst armed factions children will continue to be marginalised from demobilisation and reintegration phases. This study had a significant impact within policy circles and provided the basis of the initial United Nations examination into the issue of child soldiers, which began in 1996. The UN's first report regarding the impact of armed conflict on children, which has come to be referred to as the Machel Report, later spearheaded the UN's focus on child soldiers.⁴⁹ The Machel Report was heavily based on the empirical data and information of Brett, McCallin and O'Shea's work.⁵⁰

The literature on children and war and more specifically on child soldiers has grown. Many issues regarding child soldiers have been explored including recruitment,⁵¹ girl soldiers,⁵² small arms proliferation,⁵³ political violence against children,⁵⁴ the

⁴⁶ Cohn and Goodwin-Gill.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 176.

⁴⁹ United Nations, "Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children" (New York: United Nations, 26 August 1996).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Brett, McCallin, and O'Shea; Margaret McCallin, *The Prevention of under-Age Military Recruitment: A Review of Local and Community Based Concerns and Initiatives* (London: International Save the Children Alliance, 2001); Krijin Peters, *Re-Examining Voluntarism* Monograph No. 100 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2004).

⁵² Kenneth Cain, "The Rape of Dinah: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant," *Human Rights Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1999); Mary-Jane Fox, "Girl Soldiers: Human Security and Gendered Insecurity," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 4 (2004); Yvone E. Keairns, *The Voices of Girl Child Soldiers* (New York, NY: Quaker United Nations Office, 2002); Dyan Mazurana and others, "Girls in Fighting Forces and Groups: Their Recruitment, Participation, Demobilisation, and Reintegration," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 8, no. 2 (2002); Afua Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers: The Co-Option of Childhood* Monograph 82 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2003).

⁵³ Rachel Stohl, "Under the Gun: Children and Small Arms," *African Security Review* 11, no. 3 (2002).

⁵⁴ Ed Cairns, *Children and Political Violence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

psychological impact of war on children;⁵⁵ the legal aspects of children and war;⁵⁶ and their use in Africa.⁵⁷

One of the most up-to-date and comprehensive reference on the child soldier phenomenon is Peter Singer's *Children at War*.⁵⁸ Singer starts his book by reiterating that child soldiers are still largely invisible to both researchers and policymakers, and that 'the treatment of the phenomenon is at best peripheral.'⁵⁹ Singer establishes the justification for not only his work, but also this thesis by stating that the problem of child soldiers warrants more research and that the field will benefit from a deeper understanding of the issue, especially given that the norms and the UN's response to child soldiering has proven to be insufficient.⁶⁰ Moreover, dealing with the effects of child soldiers 'has been a gradual learning process for all involved, such that none of the operations that dealt with this issue can be described as a full success.'⁶¹

Singer argues that the phenomenon of child soldiers is much more than just a moral issue, and very much in line with this thesis, that the use of child soldiers has broader security implications. He explains that the child soldiering trend is encouraged by not addressing problems such as poverty, the lack of economic and educational opportunity, the spread of war and disease.⁶² That the complex underlying causes for the use of children as soldiers are compounded by '(1) social disruptions and failures of development caused by globalization, war and disease; (2) technological improvements in

⁵⁵ Michael Wessells, "Children, Armed Conflict, and Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, no. 5 (1998); Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection*; Mike Wessells, "Child Soldier," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (1997).

⁵⁶ Rachel Harvey, *Children and Armed Conflict: A Guide to International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law* (The Children and Armed Conflict Unit (Essex), International Bureau for Children's Right, 2003); Jenny Kuper, *International Law Concerning Child Civilians in Armed Conflict* (London: Clarendon, 1997); Ananda Millard, "Children in Armed Conflicts: Transcending Legal Responses," *Security Dialogue* 32, no. 2 (2001).

⁵⁷ T W. Bennett, *Using Children in Armed Conflict: A Legitimate African Tradition?*, Institute for Security Studies vol. Monograph No. 32 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 1998); Oliver Furley, "Child Soldiers in Africa " in *Conflict in Africa* ed. Oliver Furley (London: Tauris, 1995); Alcinda Honwana, "Negotiating Postwar Identities: Child Soldiers in Mozambique and Angola " in *Contested Terrains and Constructed Categories, Contemporary Africa in Focus* ed. George Bond and Nigel Gibson (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002); Angela McIntyre, "Rights, Root Causes and Recruitment: The Youth Factor in Africa's Armed Conflicts," *African Security Review* 12, no. 2 (2003); Angela and Thokozan Thusi McIntyre, "Children and Youth in Sierra Leone's Peacebuilding Process," *African Security Review* 12, no. 2 (2003); Paul Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone," in *Conflict in Africa*, ed. Oliver Furley (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995); Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey, 1996); Twum-Danso. Christina Wille, "Children Associated with Fighting Forces and Small Arms in the Mano River Union," in *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region*, ed. Nicolas Florquin and Eric G. Berman (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2005).

⁵⁸ Singer.

⁵⁹ Ibid., X (Author's notes).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 138, 207.

⁶¹ Ibid., 188.

⁶² Ibid., 136.

small arms; and (3) [the] rise in a new type of conflict that is far more brutal and criminalised.⁶³ He notes that armed factions recruit and use children as a low-cost and efficient way to generate force. Of particular relevance to this thesis, Liberia is shown as setting a dangerous precedent for using child soldiers in the sub-region that had a contagion effect in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and in Guinea.⁶⁴

There have been two pieces written by Ilene Cohn that examine the protection of children in peacemaking and peacekeeping processes, one of which is of particular interest to this thesis as it looks at Liberia specifically.⁶⁵ Cohn goes well beyond just looking at child DDR processes, and comprehensively analyses all components of peace processes relevant to children, including humanitarian law, normative standards as well as frameworks, and post-conflict justice or transitional justice.⁶⁶ She provides an invaluable contribution to the literature by systematically analysing and highlighting peace processes in various countries. Her purpose is to identify opportunities and prescribe methods, mechanisms and solutions to enhance child protection in peace processes from the moment mediation efforts begin through the implementation of the peacebuilding agenda.⁶⁷ In particular, Cohn argues that the use of child soldiers and the negative impact war has on children should be acknowledged from the onset of the peace negotiations so as not to be marginalised in peacebuilding efforts and ought to receive greater attention throughout the implementation of peacebuilding interventions. Cohn's article establishes a precedent for comprehensively examining peace processes and the post-conflict reconstruction phase through a children's perspective.

Cohn uses Liberia's earlier peacebuilding interventions to draw wider lessons for anti-child soldier policies that have emerged from the United Nations.⁶⁸ By evaluating the Liberian peace process through a child-focussed lens, Cohn provides a useful assessment of the 1989-96 Liberian child DDR and peacebuilding interventions. She examines the child DDR planning process, the inclusion of children in the peace agreements as well as its implementation and impact. She concludes (in 1998) that the international community's responses to the phenomenon of child soldiers had not gained much

⁶³ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 109-111.

⁶⁵ Ilene Cohn, "The Protection of Children in Peacemaking and Peacekeeping Processes," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 12, no. (1999). Ilene Cohn, "The Protection of Child Soldiers During the Liberian Peace Process," *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 6, no. (1998).

⁶⁶ Cohn, "Children in Peacemaking and Peacekeeping."

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 131.

⁶⁸ Cohn, "Protection of Child Soldiers in Liberia."

traction or momentum and therefore remains mainly rhetorical. Cohn emphasises that the opportunity to address the needs of child soldiers is often missed in the peace negotiation process and therefore the needs of child soldiers are subsequently omitted from peacebuilding process. This was the case in the Liberian peace process (1989-96). She argues that child soldiers require demobilisation and reintegration packages that address their special needs, such as physical injury, psychosocial treatment, lost education time and reuniting them with their families.⁶⁹ This work provided a sound foundation for the UN to build upon regarding addressing children's needs in peace agreements in post-conflict peacebuilding interventions.

Although Cohn's work is the closest in providing analysis of a child specific peace process in Liberia, her work shares a characteristic with many of the key texts highlighted above. Cohn's work was published before the resurgence of fighting in Liberia in 1999 and thus does not cover or provide analysis of the latest phase of Liberia's peacebuilding or post-conflict reconstruction efforts beginning in 2003. This thesis will therefore not only build on Cohn's analysis, but will directly respond to the dearth in child-focused analysis of post-conflict reconstruction that she rightfully identified.

Beyond academic literature, human rights and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have produced a lot of work on and paid much attention to child soldiers. The material that organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Save the Children, Watchlist, and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers produce has helped raise global awareness by heavily advocating and pushing the issue of child soldiers onto the international policy agenda.⁷⁰ As a result of the focus on advocacy much of the material is highly emotive, quite descriptive, often testimonial and in some ways quite limited. Notwithstanding its inherent limitations, this is nonetheless a useful body of literature that serves the purpose of raising awareness, documenting trends, fundraising for the organisations, and sending simple messages on the issue, but does not necessarily provide analysis or alternative perspectives.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 180.

⁷⁰ Amnesty International; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers Global Report* (London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2004); Human Rights Watch, "Children in Combat," *Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Project* 8, no. 1 (1996); Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill: Child Soldiers in Liberia," *Human Rights Watch* 16, no. 2 (2004); Human Rights Watch, "Youth, Poverty and Blood: The Lethal Legacy of West Africa's Regional Warriors," Vol. 17, no. 5 (March 2005); Keairns; Save the Children, *Children's Rights: Reality or Rhetoric* The CRC: The First 10 Years (London: Save the Children Fund, 1999); Save the Children, *Child Soldiers: Care & Protection of Children in Emergencies A Field Guide* (London: Save the Children Fund, 2001); Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, *Nothing Left to Lose: The Legacy of Armed Conflict and Liberia's Children* (June 2004).

There are gaps in our understanding about the threat children pose to peace and security, the role they play in consolidating peace and security, how well DDR processes reflect the needs of child soldiers, and the overall importance of successfully dealing with child soldiers in post-conflict situations. Given the importance of the role of children in peacebuilding, Liberia's most recent attempt at disarming, demobilising, and reintegrating its child soldiers deserves deeper analysis than has been provided.

Liberia

Liberia is a ideal case-study for examining post-conflict reconstruction and more specifically, child interventions in peacebuilding as it is not only a classic example of the rationale for the use of child soldiers as a mean to wage war but also because of the explicit attention children received in the peace agreement in 2003. The peace agreement in 2003 was not the first peace accord, but it was the first time the DDR of child soldiers was explicitly recognised as a priority. It is important to remember that while the war was being fought in Liberia the international community's interest (the UN, ECOWAS, AU, etc.) in peacekeeping and peacebuilding was evolving, as was its acknowledgement, understanding and response to child soldiers. Liberia in many ways embodied much of what was wrong with not only modern war, but also the international community's inability to prevent it, and until 2003, control and manage it.

Liberia's civil war began on 25 December 1989, with a cross-border attack from a base in Cote d'Ivoire. Consisting of approximately 165 men, Charles Taylor's forces attacked government troops with the aim of overthrowing President Samuel Doe. Within months, as the movement gained momentum as a direct result of the recruitment of civilians, including many children, Taylor was able to turn a small insurgency into an armed-group with thousands of fighters.⁷¹ Civilians were easily mobilised and took up arms because of deep-rooted historical social, economic and political grievances, the lack of good governance, pervasive corruption, and an unpopular regime.⁷² From the onset of war, a defining feature of the Liberian conflict was the unprecedented and continual use of child soldiers initiated by Charles Taylor. The initial and deliberate policy to recruit children set a dangerous precedent, and subsequently every faction followed suit. Initially, young entrepreneurial men and women took up arms to gain political power,

⁷¹ Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), 31-111.

⁷² Ibid., 78.

change the political status quo, and address their everyday existential problems.⁷³ Over the years, ethnicity was manipulated for political purposes, helping fuel the conflict and contributing to the ready pool of civilian combatants.⁷⁴

As time went by, the conflict soon acquired a logic of its own. Alliances shifted, factions splintered and new factions emerged, and the war's *raison d'être* became less about addressing grievances and more about the benefits of plunder and looting.⁷⁵ The proliferation of small arms compounded the problem and quickly flooded into not only Liberia, but also the entire Mano River sub-region in West Africa. Small arms and light weapons were the weapons of choice.

There is an extensive body of literature on Liberia and much of the material examines the country's dramatic history, the root causes and conduct of the war, the systemic breakdown of governance, the political economy of the war, as well as its regional and international peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions.⁷⁶ That being said, apart from

⁷³ Ibid., 305-309.

⁷⁴ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeepers, Politicians, and Warlords- the Liberian Peace Process* (Tokyo, Paris, & New York: United Nations University Press, 1999), 20-24.

⁷⁵ Ibid; Stephen Ellis, "Liberia's Warlord Insurgency " in *African Guerrillas* ed. Chris Clapham (Oxford: James Currey, 1998); Amos Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder Towards Democratic Governance in Liberia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

⁷⁶ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin; Festus B. Aboagye and Alhaji M. S. Bah, *Liberia at a Crossroads: A Preliminary Look at the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Protection of Civilians* (Institute for Security Studies, 2004); Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa- Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War* Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Abiodun Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill The International Involvement in the Liberian Civil War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Philippa Atkinson, *The War Economy in Liberia: A Political Analysis* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1997), Network Paper 22; Morten Bøås, "The Liberian Civil War: New War/Old War?," *Global Society* 19, no. 1 (2005); Cain; Cohn, "Protection of Child Soldiers in Liberia."; Stephen Ellis, "Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence," *African Affairs* 94, no. (1995); Ellis, "Liberia's Warlord Insurgency "; Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* ; Danny Hoffman, "The Civilian Target in Sierra Leone and Liberia: Political Power, Military Strategy, and Humanitarian Intervention," *African Affairs* 103, no. (2004); Robert Lloyd, "Rebuilding the Liberian State," *Current History* May, no. (2006); Ikechi Mgbeoji, *Collective Insecurity: The Liberian Crisis, Unilateralism, and Global Order* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003); Mary H Moran and M Anne Pitcher, "The 'Basket Case' and the 'Poster Child': Explaining the End of Civil Conflicts in Liberia and Mozambique " *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2004); John-Peter Pham, *Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State* (New York: Reed Press 2004); W. Reno, "Anti-Corruption Efforts in Liberia: Are They Aimed at the Right Targets?," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 3 (2008); William Reno, "Reinvention of an African Patrimonial State: Charles Taylor's Liberia " *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1995); William Reno, "The Business of War in Liberia," *Current History* (1996); William Reno, *Humanitarian Emergencies and Warlord Economies in Liberia and Sierra Leone* (Helsinki: United Nations University & World Institute for Development Economics Research 1997); William Reno, "The Organisation of Warlord Politics in Liberia," in *Warlord Politics and African States*, ed. William Reno (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999); Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone."; Sawyer; Amos Sawyer, *Social Capital, Survival Strategies, and Their Potential for Post-Conflict Governance in Liberia* (United Nations University, 2005); Amadu Sesay, "Historical Background to the Liberian Crisis," in *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peacekeeping*, ed. M. A. Vogt (Lagos: Gabumo Publishing Co., 1992); Mats Utas, "Sweet Battlefields: Youth and the Liberian Civil War" (PhD, Uppsala University, 2003); David Wippman, "Enforcing the Peace: ECOWAS and the Liberian Civil War," in

Peter Singer, Ilene Cohn, and Mats Utas little has been written specifically on child soldiers in Liberia or on their involvement in the country's peacebuilding interventions.

Stephen Ellis's *The Mask of Anarchy* provides one of the best overviews of the Liberian conflict until the elections in 1997. Although he highlights the role and participation of child soldiers, including his description of child soldiers being organised into special units known as Small Boy Units, his work does not go into much detail of their involvement in peacebuilding, nor does it focus on child DDR. Another authoritative author, Amos Sawyer, concentrates on governance issues, institutional capacity, the political economy and state collapse in Liberia.⁷⁷ While he acknowledges the importance of addressing children's needs in the Liberian peacebuilding process, the issue is not dealt with in much detail; it is touched upon in only two pages.⁷⁸ Sawyer acknowledges that as the conflict adversely affected many children, the peacebuilding initiatives needed to address their plight.⁷⁹ Although Sawyer claims that child-focussed peacebuilding initiatives are essential to addressing the wrongs of war, he merely gives a brief description of how all Liberian children were traumatised and provides some general prescriptive suggestions and explores the challenges of providing such assistance.⁸⁰ For instance, he argues that the rehabilitation of child soldiers into families and communities poses a particularly delicate challenge, especially since many of these children have known nothing except war and have committed atrocious acts themselves.⁸¹ In line with his focus on institutional arrangements, his main concern is that programmes being implemented by international and national organisations for children (including former child soldiers) and youth are too concerned with short-term results and not long-term sustainability. He rightfully observes that 'very little preparation for transition from the phase of humanitarian emergency to development' has taken place.⁸² Although one can infer Sawyer is referring to the child DDR programme amongst other things, it lacks detail or analysis.

Enforcing Restraint- Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts, ed. Lori Fisler Damrosch (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993).

⁷⁷ Amos Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia : Tragedy and Challenge* (San Francisco ICS Press, 1992); Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder*, Sawyer, *Social Capital*.

⁷⁸ Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder*, 148-49.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 148.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 148-9.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 149.

There are notable contributions analysing regional and international interventions in Liberia's peace processes however mostly focused on the years between 1989 and 1997.⁸³ Despite their recurrent failure up to 2003, Liberia's multiple peace agreements have been well documented and their implications known. Many of the failed peace agreements, including the Cotonou (1995) and Abuja Accords (1996) stressed the importance of a certain level of security, they called for the need for disarmament and peacebuilding strategies.⁸⁴ Throughout *Peacekeepers, Politicians, and Warlords* attention is specifically given and explicit references are made to child soldiers, albeit not in any great detail. The involvement of child soldiers is highlighted as a defining feature throughout the war and although ultimately unsuccessful because the climate for disarmament was undeveloped, the authors claim children were given special attention in the planning and implementation phases of the DDR process up until 1997.⁸⁵

Despite many authoritative contributions, two main limitations exist in this body of work. Firstly, with the exception of Sawyer's *Beyond Plunder*, many contributions were published prior to the war ended in 2003. The most recent part of the Liberia's peacebuilding process has received less attention than the country's previous stages. Secondly, although there is wide acknowledgement for the need to address children and child soldiers in peacebuilding (more so in later contributions), it is dealt with superficially and as a tangential issue. This thesis will address Liberia's most recent peacebuilding intervention as well as look at DDR from the perspective of child soldiers as an integral component of consolidating sustainable peace and security in Liberia.

Methodology

This thesis provides a systematic examination of Liberia's child DDR process that began in December 2003. The aim of the study is to formulate an analysis of the centrality and contribution of child DDR in Liberia's peacebuilding process. The methodological approach of this study is qualitative and relies on three main methods of data collection: document analysis; semi-structured interviews; and participant observation. A literature

⁸³ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin; Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*; Alao; Mgbeoji. Wipman. George Klay Kieh, Jr., "Liberia: Legacies and Leaders " in *From Promise to Practice* ed. Chandra Lekha Sriram and Karin Wermester(Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003). Quentin Outram, "It's Terminal Either Way': An Analysis of Armed Conflict in Liberia, 1989-1996," *Review of African Economy* 73 (1997). Jeremy Armon and Andy Carl, eds., *An International Review of Peace Initiatives Accord*, The Liberian Peace Process 1990-1996 (London: Conciliation Resources, 1996).

⁸⁴ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 71.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 21, 45-6, 81-3, 120.

review was conducted within the relevant fields including peacebuilding, children and war and Liberia. Primary source information, such as published and unpublished official documents, policy guidelines, meeting minutes, high-level correspondence, DDR programme documents, policy papers and interviews have invaluable contributed to the data collection. Also important to the data collection were secondary source information, such as newspaper articles, media, and non-governmental organisation documents and reports.

Semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of international and Liberian policymakers, practitioners and academics were conducted in multiple locations including Liberia, Accra, New York, London, Geneva over a span of six years (2004-2010).⁸⁶ These interviews were intended to gain information and insights about Liberia's peacebuilding intervention, its child DDR programme (policies, design and implementation), and ascertain its impact on the consolidation of peace and security. The respondents consisted of high-level representative (i.e., the former United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative in Liberia, the head of UNICEF Liberia, Liberian government officials, etc.), working-level staff members (i.e., UNMIL staff, UNMIL military observers, UNICEF employees, members of civil society, etc.), but also a cross section of Liberian society, including village elders, former child soldiers, former adult combatants, internally displaced persons and regular citizens. This method was effective for gathering information on the child DDR process, identifying many of the challenges, gauging the frame of mind of the policymakers and the views of community members and former child soldiers. Although many of the views and positions were personal, many of the people interviewed were either making policy decisions, implementing or directly involved in the child DDR or the wider peacebuilding processes. Given the author's role within UNMIL, he was able to have candid both on-the-record and off-the-record with many of the people developing the policies and implementing the programmes in Liberia as they were being executed. There was an attempt to go beyond and deeper than the organisations' point of view. Where possible, information secured from respondents was triangulated and verified in an attempt to improve its reliability as well as usefulness (in terms of mitigating bias). Due to the lack of academic research on

⁸⁶ See the Bibliography and Sources for a list of pertinent meetings attended, interviews and focus groups conducted.

the topic and the high turnover in Liberia post-2003 these interviews were integral in establishing a more complete and informed perspective of the reality on the ground.⁸⁷

Another invaluable method used to gather data was through participant observation. The author lived in Monrovia, Liberia from January through September 2005 while working for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This time in Liberia enabled the observation of the planning and implementation of parts of the child DDR and the wider peacebuilding process, as well as provided the opportunity to speak to many people that were either involved in or impacted by the process. Hired as the Humanitarian Coordination Section's Liaison and Reports Officer the author's role was to interact with international and national entities including United Nations agencies, NGO, and government officials. It was the author's responsibilities to write daily, weekly and monthly reports on the overall security, relief, humanitarian, and development situation in Liberia; this included covering the DDR programme. Being in Liberia and working for UNMIL significantly facilitated access to individuals (policymakers, practitioners, child soldiers and community members) as well as to documentation within the UN system, NGOs and government, both of which benefited the data collection and research for this study. While in Liberia, the author participated in and was a member of various peacebuilding oversight mechanisms and working groups pertaining to security and development (i.e., the Child Protection Working Group, the DDR Forum, etc.). This participation provided a first-hand insight into the complexities of the planning, implementation and political processes of peacebuilding interventions in post-conflict Liberia. However, given the delays in the implementation of the DDR programme, the author left before the reintegration process had begun in earnest. Since departing Liberia in 2005, a follow up research trip was conducted on 29 March through 5 April 2006.⁸⁸

Structure

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter two (Children and War) concentrates on children and war, and the issue of child soldiers specifically. Based on current literature, the chapter provides an overview of the global child soldiering phenomenon

⁸⁷ Due to the transient nature of peacekeeping and peacebuilding environments such as Liberia, many of the people that were part of the initial disarmament process have moved on and left Liberia. Where possible, they were tracked and interviewed to gain their insight.

⁸⁸ The author participated in a high-level consultations addressing security sector governance with senior government officials, security sector practitioners, scholars, and civil society. Many of the transitional government representatives were integrally involved in the DDR programme and provided valuable insights.

and discourse. The evolution of the child soldier discourse will be addressed, along with the theories that have come to underpin it, explaining why child soldiering is a problem, how children are recruited, what their roles are and what their involvement in war means to peace and security. This chapter goes on to examine the international community's (UN, AU's and NGOs) engagement with the issue of child soldiering, and locate the child soldiering response within international approaches, policies and programmes. In doing so, the story of child soldiers will be told, complete with an overview of how the international community has responded on a global and regional level.

The history of Liberia is the focus of chapter three (War and Peace in Liberia). It provides an overview of Liberia, including the contemporary political, economic, and social context in which the war took place. Liberia's civil war, from 1989 through 2003, will be addressed - including root causes, how the war was conducted, and an explanation of the various warring factions. Special emphasis will be given to the implications of the war on children and their role in the war. This chapter will present the various interventions to the Liberian war, including the past attempts at child disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration.

Chapter four (Peacebuilding, DDR and Children) provides an overview and theory behind the concept of peacebuilding - including specifically disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration. The chapter will explore issues such as: what determines successful peacebuilding, why security is crucial for development, why reforming the security sector is important, and an explanation of the logic for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration. In doing so, the chapter provides an overview of the strategic framework of Liberia's DDR programme, including institutional arrangements, its objectives and structure. This chapter addresses the need for children to be included in post-conflict peacebuilding endeavours. Liberia's post-2003 child disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration efforts are dealt with in-depth in the subsequent three chapters.

Chapter five (Disarmament in Liberia) examines the most recent attempt at disarming combatants- including child soldiers, during the post-conflict peacebuilding phase in Liberia. This chapter not only analyses the guidelines of all components of the disarmament process, but also provides a comprehensive assessment of how the programme was implemented. The challenges, such as planning, operational

implementation, and combatants' access are examined, as are the implications of disarmament in the overall success of the DDR programme.

Chapter six (Demobilisation in Liberia) builds on the previous chapter and examines the subsequent step in the peacebuilding process, child demobilisation. Using a similar framework of analysis and structure, this chapter describes the implementation of demobilisation and assesses its effectiveness and impact to peacebuilding. Some key issues raised in this chapter include the various components of demobilisation, the payment of cash allowances to children and the link between the disarmament and demobilisation.

An assessment of the child reintegration process is the focus of chapter seven (Reintegration in Liberia). Building on the previous two chapters and using a similar framework of analysis and structure, the reintegration process is explored in detail. Although the reintegration process is more disparate than the disarmament and demobilisation processes, conclusions are drawn as to whether the programmes are equipped to adequately address the needs of child soldiers and the society at large, and whether the reintegration of former child soldiers was in fact improved as a result of the programmes implementation.

The conclusion (chapter 8) addresses the various lessons, the implications and perspectives drawn from the Liberian child DDR programme. The link between security and development in Liberia in relation to effectively dealing with the legacy and involvement of the child soldiers that participated in the country's war is elaborated upon. Furthermore, the contribution of child DDR to the overall peacebuilding endeavour is considered while wider lessons from the Liberian experience and their relevance to future similar processes are drawn.

Chapter 2 – Children and War

Seeing images of children carrying guns in war zones around the world are no longer an uncommon sight. If anything, to see such images is now the norm rather than an exception. Policymakers, NGOs and academics alike have claimed there has been a militarization of childhood throughout the world.⁸⁹ This is true in both the developed and developing world, although the attention often falls on the latter. Both governments and non-state actors utilise children in their ranks. Although there is now a plethora of global human rights instruments, protocols, declarations and frameworks to protect children both in peace and in war, the reality on the ground shows that they are flagrantly ignored and for the most part ineffectual. Not only does war devastate children's lives in terms of displacement, destroying basic needs, development infrastructure, and cause physical harm, but adults are recruiting children to fight beside them at an alarming rate. Despite a wave of moral condemnation children are not only falling victim to war, but are also being used to wage wars around the world. The issue of children and war, of which child soldiering is a component, is now permanently placed on the United Nations' Security Council's agenda and is acknowledged as a threat to international peace and security.

This chapter provides an overview of the child soldier issue— defining what is meant by the term child soldier, the scope of the problem, the causes and means of recruitment explores the reasons why children are used to soldier, the impact their participation has and the wider implications of the use of child soldiers on war. Lastly, a brief analysis of the UN's engagement and response to child soldiering problem is provided.

⁸⁹ Furley, 29.

What is a child?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is ratified by every country excluding Somalia and the United States and bestows children with a myriad of rights relating to health, education, privacy, citizenship, and protection. According to the CRC, adopted in 1989, a child includes 'every human being below the age of eighteen years.'⁹⁰ Although the definition of a child is enshrined in the first article of the CRC and seems pretty straightforward it is not that clear cut. As the notion of a child is socially and culturally constructed it continues to be contested.

Within this discourse some argue that the notion of childhood is a relative concept that is constructed relative to historical time, geography, culture, and social-economic conditions.⁹¹ That being said, in some non-Western cultures adulthood is achieved at an earlier age (in the early teens). Once a child goes through an initiation process normally conducted by an elder (or a group of elders), in many cultures is a rite of passage, that child passes the threshold of childhood and enters adulthood. So culturally anyone who has been initiated is considered an adult in that society, be they thirteen, fourteen or fifteen. Although these cultural differences are acknowledged and appreciated they do not change nor do they negate the legal obligations of states to protect children from participation in armed conflicts as per the CRC.⁹² Every state except the United States and Somalia are parties to the CRC.

This being said, there are serious limitations within the CRC regarding child protection. The CRC only covers States Parties and their obligations to protect. Therefore, the activities of non-state actors are not covered within the legal obligation or framework of the treaty. This is a reflection of the times when the treaty was codified, international conflicts were still perceived as the norm and the scourge of internal civil wars had not yet become a reality.

Another limitation of the CRC with regard to child protection is the discrepancy in Article 38, which lowers the minimum age of recruitment of children as soldiers to fifteen years. Although a child is defined as anyone under the age of eighteen a lower threshold has been set within the CRC with regard to children being utilised as soldiers. This legalises and leaves children between the age of fifteen and eighteen years of age vulnerable to recruitment and participation in armed conflicts. This discrepancy was on the insistence of countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, who were unwilling to change their recruitment practices which allow for the

⁹⁰United Nations, "Convention on the Rights of the Child ", Article 1.

⁹¹Kuper, 13.

⁹²The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies exclusively to State Parties.

recruitment of children as young as 15 into their cadet and soldier-in-training programmes.⁹³

Since the codification of the CRC there have been concerted efforts to raise the age of recruitment and participation of children by both state and non-state actors to 18, both in inter- and intra-state conflicts. Although limited in its application and scope, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) went further to protecting children than did the CRC with regard to armed conflict. The Charter was adopted on 11 July 1990, by member-states of the Organisation of African States (OAU), which has transitioned into what is now the African Union. The Charter only covers African States and defined a child as anyone under the age of eighteen. The Charter mirrors the CRC by afforded the child many rights regarding basic needs such as health, education, freedom of expression, and various protection. With specific regard to armed conflict, the Charter requires the States to respect international humanitarian law, 'to take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular, from recruiting any child'.⁹⁴ Moreover according to the Charter, States shall 'protect civilian populations in armed conflicts and shall take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict... [including in] situations of internal conflicts, tension and strife'.⁹⁵ Although this Charter in some ways was more inclusive and forward thinking than the CRC, like the CRC it was wholly unsuccessful in stemming the recruitment of children on the African continent.⁹⁶

The next international attempt to strengthen the CRC with regard to child protection was the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OP) which was signed in May 2000, and came into force on 12 February 2002.⁹⁷ The OP further developed child protection specifically with regard to minimum age of recruitment and covering armed conflict both international and internal in nature. Although less problematic than the original CRC with regard to the age restriction and the inclusion of protection within internal conflicts the OP is not as comprehensive as some child protection advocates desired or called for. The political negotiation process produced a compromised treaty

⁹³ Harvey, 27. Matthew Happold, *Child Soldiers in International Law* Melland Schill Studies in International Law (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 71-4.

⁹⁴ Organisation of African Unity, "African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child," (Addis Ababa: Organisation of African Unity, 1990), Article 22.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Happold, 85.

⁹⁷ United Nations, "Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography," (New York: United Nations, 2000).

that watered down its potential impact in a number of ways.⁹⁸

Although the OP managed to raise the minimum age of participation of children in armed conflicts it is not universal. The OP says that non-state groups are explicitly prohibited from recruiting and using under eighteen year olds in any form or method of recruitment. States are prohibited only from compulsory recruitment of soldiers under 18 years old. Meaning that States Parties are allowed to accept children who have 'volunteered' for service, albeit with flimsy safeguards. It also calls for the States Parties to do everything they feasibly can to prevent the recruitment of under eighteen and their involvement in direct hostilities.⁹⁹ This vagueness allows for the broadest interpretation, resulting in many 15-18 year olds being allowed to enlist in state armed forces. So a different standard was applied to state and non-state actors. However, over the years through strong advocacy and campaigning the under-18 consensus became to be seen as the minimum threshold for the recruitment of child soldiers.

What is a Child Soldier

Although not quite as contentious as the definition of a child, the definition of a child soldier has evolved over the past decade to be fairly comprehensive. The historic image of a soldier is statistically a man in uniform, armed, and part of an organised, if not, state armed forces. Given the changes in the nature of war, which have moved away from inter-state combat to intra-state civil wars, this historical image of a soldier is only part of the reality. In many intra-state wars civilian populations are mobilised and provide means to perpetrate conflict. With little training these mobilised civilians are armed and sent to civilian villages and towns that have become the frontlines, battlefields and areas for plunder. With that changed reality the image of a young soldier, be it a boy or a girl, carrying an AK-47 has gained the attention of not only the international media but of international policymakers in part because of their age and partly because of the atrocities that are committed to them, and the ones they commit. Child soldiers are now regularly in the mainstream media, documented in newspapers, sung about in songs, their experiences written about in books.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Happold, 74-6.

⁹⁹ United Nations, "Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography," Article 1 and 4.

¹⁰⁰ Examples of movies portraying child soldiers include *Blood Diamonds*, *Tears of the Sun* and *Innocent Voices*. Examples of songs include the *Kids with Guns* by the Gorillaz. Examples of books include *A Long Way Gone* by Ismael Beah, *The Darling* by Russell Banks, *They Fight like Soldiers*, *They Die like Children* by Romeo Dallaire.

Today, the term child soldier means more than simply a child (boy or girl) who is armed. It has come to include any child that is associated with a fighting faction, in both state or non-state forces. The term child soldier now applies to a wide range of youngsters with enormously varying experiences and roles.¹⁰¹ The term child soldier or children associated with fighting forces (CAFF) is used to describe children in auxiliary roles such as a messenger, porter, cook, spies or as a wife; as well as combatants on the frontlines, as executioners, guards or bodyguards.

The Cape Town Principles provide the most accepted definition of a child soldier. They were drafted and adopted as a collaborative effort of leading scholars and practitioners and UNICEF in 1997. Despite being adopted in South Africa, they apply to the children regardless of their location. This thesis uses its definition of a child soldier for two main reasons. First, it is the most comprehensive and widely accepted definition within the UN system. Second, it was this definition that both the United Nations and UNICEF used during the Liberian peacebuilding exercise and DDR programme (of 2003). A child soldier is defined as:

‘any person under eighteen years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely family members. Girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage are included in this definition. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.’¹⁰²

The Scope of the Issue

The victimization of children by war and their militarization as soldiers are by no means a new phenomenon, and have been well documented through history. The practice of recruiting and using children as soldiers dates back to almost the first record of war. Children have historically played a part in battles in both auxiliary and combat roles. Some examples of the militarization of children include the Spartans of Ancient Greece who trained and used children as young as six years old as soldiers.¹⁰³ In the early nineteenth century both Napoleon’s and the Prussian armies included soldiers as young as twelve year old. For instance, Karl von Clausewitz, one of the most famous military theorists, joined the Prussian army at the tender age of twelve.¹⁰⁴ In the American Civil war (1861) ten year olds were used in both auxiliary positions (such as drummers) as well as combatants. During World War II, the Hitler Youth was a prime example of the militarization of young people. In the 1980’s during the Iran-Iraq War Iranian children were used

¹⁰¹ Happold, 6.

¹⁰² UNICEF, "Cape Town Principles and Best Practices."

¹⁰³ James Marten, ed. *Children and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 5-7.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Howard, *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

as mine-clearers and cannon fodder.¹⁰⁵ They were encouraged and forced to run through fields littered with mines to clear the way for adult forces. Unfortunately there is no shortage of conflicts where children have been both victims and perpetrators of violence.

Child soldiering is not a new phenomenon, however what is now known as the ‘modern child soldier’ is quite novel.¹⁰⁶ This modern child soldier is a product of the times—characterised by internal civil wars, the targeting of civilians, the proliferation of small and light weapons, bad governance structures in vulnerable countries, and poverty including all its discontents (including political, economic and social marginalization). This idea of a ‘modern child soldier’ is in part due to the distinct concept and articulation of child rights that coincided with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent unravelling of some places in the developing world. In some places this unravelling translated into civil unrest and armed conflict produced the demand for soldiers of which children provided the supply.

Despite Africa being the epicentre of the child soldiering phenomenon, it is by no means the only continent where children are militarised. The child soldiering phenomenon is a global one. According to research conducted between 1999 and 2001 child soldiering, as part of either government forces or armed-groups, featured in 36 countries afflicted by armed conflict worldwide (see map).¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, ‘in more than 85 countries, hundreds of thousands more under-18s have been recruited into government armed forces, paramilitaries, civil militia and a wide variety of non-state armed-groups’ not engaged in active combat.¹⁰⁸ Between 2001 and 2004 armed conflict in 28 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas involved child soldiers.¹⁰⁹ Their ages ranged from eighteen years old to as young as seven.

Although the precise number is difficult to obtain, it is estimated, and generally accepted, that approximately 300,000 child soldiers are mobilised in armed conflict regions at any time.¹¹⁰ This is a rolling figure, and by no means the aggregate number of child soldiers that have participated in conflicts to date. These global statistics should help break the stereotype that child soldiering is unique to Africa, a stereotype purported by the many images that are shown portraying young Africans armed with AK-47s.

¹⁰⁵ Singer, 22.

¹⁰⁶ Singer uses the term ‘the modern child soldier’.

¹⁰⁷ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report on Child Soldiers*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004*, 13.

¹¹⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report on Child Soldiers*. Singer, 29-30.

Africa

Africa is a continent that has experienced much armed conflict over the past half century, a large number of which either pre-dated the conclusion of the Cold War or began once it ended. The scourge of violence that has raged through Africa is not specific to one corner of Africa. In addition to the countries that suffered from armed conflict and the participation of child soldiers between 2001-4 which total approximately 100,000 child soldiers, other countries have had to either struggle with the legacy of previous conflicts including the involvement of child soldiers such as-- Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and South Africa; or were struggling with political violence including armed conflict such as— Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan and Zimbabwe.¹¹¹ That being said, approximately 22 out of the 53 nations in Africa have a legacy of the use of children as soldiers. It has been said that there is an ‘almost endemic link between children and warfare in Africa.’¹¹² Moreover, it could probably be said that armed conflict in general has been endemic in Africa since post-colonial times.

Asia

The prevalence of child soldiering is high in Asia and has been for some time.¹¹³ Like Africa, armed conflict and political instability has been quite present in pockets of the Asian region during the past few decades. Apart from the countries listed above that were engaged in active conflict between 2001 and 2004, many more have either had to or are in the process of having to deal the legacy of children’s involvement in conflict or political violence and civil unrest. Although to varying degrees such countries include Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Laos, Pakistan, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan and Vietnam.¹¹⁴ Moreover, North Korea is an example of a nation that since the Korean War in 1953 has been highly militarised and has affected many children. Throughout the years it is estimated that over one million secondary school aged children (14-16) have received military training and are members of the government sponsored Red Youth Guard Militia.¹¹⁵ Since they are not currently engaged in war the true number of militarised children are not included in the global figure of child soldiers even though the country has been on the brink of war since the conclusion of the Korean War.

Apart from the listed countries engaged in active conflict between 2001 and 2004, Myanmar (Burma) is a country that warrants being highlighted in order to grasp the gravity of the situation

¹¹¹ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004*, 35-111.

¹¹² Singer, 19.

¹¹³ Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁴ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004*, 160-215.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 180.

of its nation's children. Myanmar has been under a military dictatorship since 1962 and has flagrantly abused its children for a long time. Both the state, and almost all of the thirty-plus non-state armed-groups opposing the state are responsible for recruiting and using children in their struggle.¹¹⁶ Myanmar is reported to have more child soldiers than any other country in the world, with approximately 70,000 currently mobilised in the government forces and up to another 7,000 in the various non-state armed-groups.¹¹⁷ Moreover, children represent up to 45 percent of all new recruits into the government forces. This is particularly worrisome when considering the aggregate number of children that grown up and passed through military ranks.

Europe

European countries are on the list of countries where recruitment of child soldiers occurs. In 2004, child soldiers were present in the conflict in Chechnya-Russia and although with varying intensity children have previously been known to used as soldiers were mobilised in struggles in Balkan countries (such as Croatia, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo), Spain and Turkey.¹¹⁸

Despite all of efforts of many European governments with regard to safeguarding children, one notable feature in Europe is that many of the countries allow for the 'voluntary' enlistment of under-18s (above the age of 16 years old). In some countries children under eighteen years old and in some cases as young as sixteen can enlist themselves into armed forces or military training programmes. These countries include Belgium, Croatia, United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland.¹¹⁹ Only until recently the United Kingdom allowed its 17-year-old soldiers to enter combat, while actively recruiting 16 and 17 year olds with their parents permission.¹²⁰ Although many of these countries have now come to pledge that they would not send children into combat, this shows that child protection, and specifically the issue of child soldiering is also a concern in some of the world's most developed countries. The global child soldier figure does not include these recruited non-mobilised children outside the theatres of conflict.

¹¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Sold to Be Soldiers, the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in Burma* (New York, October 2007), 11-14.

¹¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *My Gun Was as Tall as Me* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002), 2-8.

¹¹⁸ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004*, 215-289.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 17.

The Middle East

The Middle East is another region that is highly militarised with a high prevalence of child soldiering. It is another region, like Africa, that armed conflict or struggles are endemic. Between 2004 and 2007, armed conflicts were raging in Iraq, Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Lebanon. A common feature in all of these conflicts was the use of child soldiers either by government forces (or sponsored forces of the government) or non-state armed forces. In some cases the involvement of child soldiers ranged from throwing rocks at opposing forces to frontline fighting, or terrorist activity (in the form of suicide bombing).¹²¹ Apart from the countries listed above that were engaged in active conflict between 2001 and 2004, some other countries in the region, such as Algeria, Lebanon and Iran, have a legacy of children's involvement in conflict or political violence or civil unrest. Moreover, many countries in the region permit either voluntary enlistment or military training of under-18s into their national forces. These countries include Bahrain, Djibouti, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Oman and United Arab Emirates.¹²²

The Americas

Although the Americas have been relatively stable over the past decade (with a few exceptions—Colombia, Haiti, Mexico and Peru), the region is not exempt from concern with regard to the use of child soldiers. The conflict in Colombia is notorious for the paramilitary and armed opposition group's use of child soldiers. It is estimated in 2004 that as many as 14,000 children were soldiers in Colombia.¹²³ Many countries, particularly in Central America, including El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, but also Haiti in the Caribbean, are recovering from armed conflicts that employed or had a devastating effect on children.

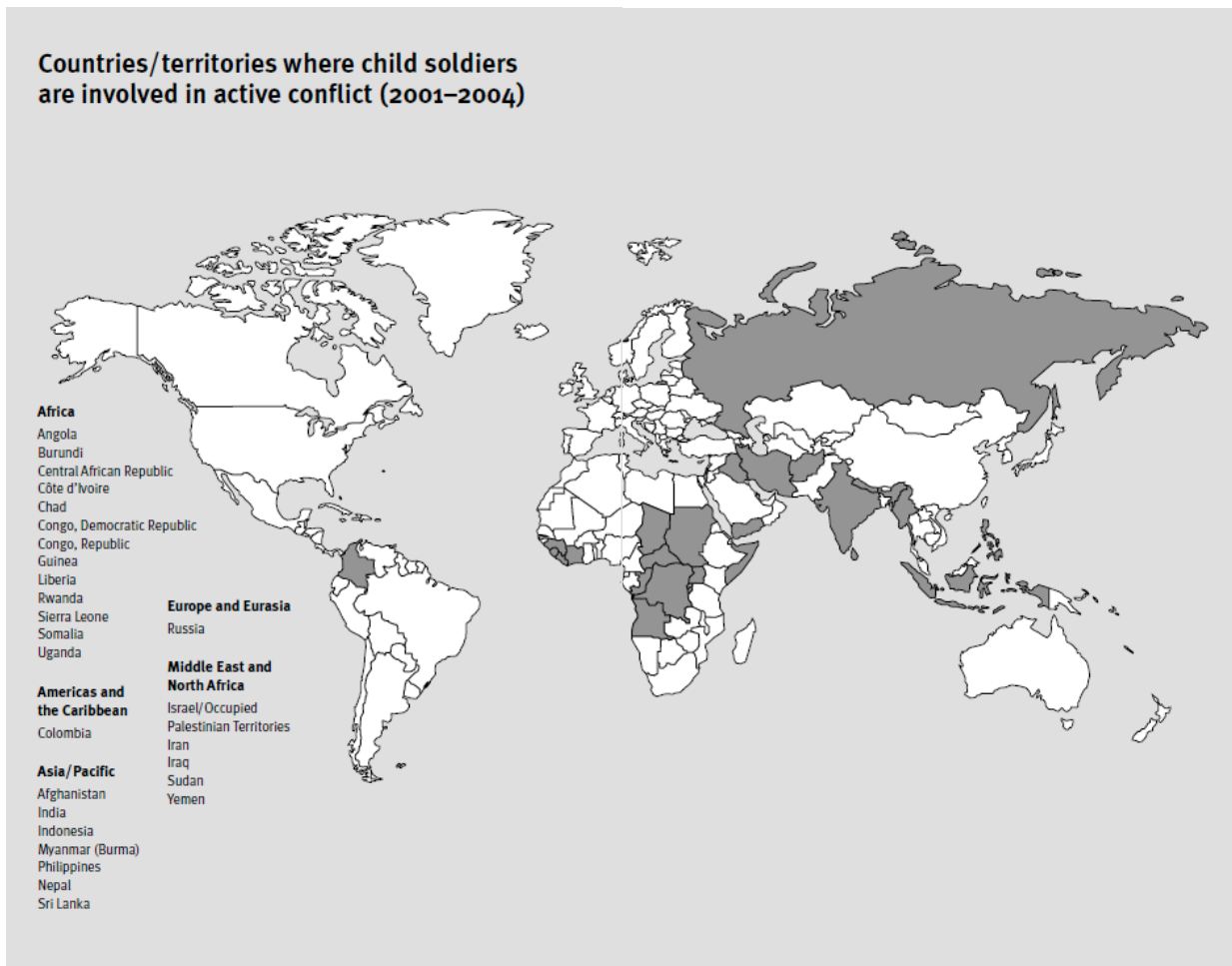
Like in Europe, most countries in the Americas permit the voluntary enlistment of under-18s into their armed forces or their training programmes. Those countries include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Dominic Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela. In Canada and the United States under-18s are recruited for the national armed forces, although in Canada they mostly end up as reserve troops and the government has pledged not to send them to combat. The United States actively recruits under-18s to the tune of 10,000 per year. And approximately 470,000 children are part of the military training programme.

¹²¹ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004*, 312-315.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 291-325.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 126.

These children are not reflected in the global child soldiering figures. The United States government actively uses public (or state) schools as recruitment grounds for their armed forces. There are documented cases of 17-year-old children being deployed into combat in Bosnia, and the Gulf War I, and Somalia. Since 2002, most of the branches of the US armed force, with the exception of the Marine Corps, now prohibits and restrict children from being deployed to combat.¹²⁴



Source: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. *Child Soldiers Global Report*. London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2004.

There are similarities between child soldiers and children involved in violent organised crime.¹²⁵ Both represent a militarisation of children to serve the needs of larger causes, together with both the dangers and benefits that come along with that. Children involved in organised crime movements in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and the United States. This is cause for grave concern within those countries. Some similarities include the treatment of members of armed

¹²⁴ Ibid., 152-4.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

gangs and that of child soldiers, many of the factors that influence or motivate young people's participation, a lack of alternative means of supporting themselves and their families, geography or living inside a gang infested area, and the physical danger and social stigma associated to their involvement in a gang. Moreover, it is clear that the issue of violent gangs is both a security and a children protection concern, much like child soldiering. Although armed and violent youth gangs and child soldiers may be motivated by a myriad of similar factors and although their experiences may overlap, the issue differ drastically from child soldiering by its lack of context— with regard to political violence.¹²⁶

Although the common image of a child soldier is that of an AK-47 toting African child, the statistics and prevalence of the militarization of children it is truly a global issue. Furthermore, though it is technically legal according to the OP for children to voluntarily enlist into national armies, once they have done so they technically become child soldiers whether they are deployed or not. As we have seen, this corruption of childhood is not unique to the developing or under-developed world, but is also happening in some of the world's richest nations.

The New Face of War

Many academics and policymakers comment on the changing face or nature of modern war. That modern war is qualitatively different from what it was even fifty years ago despite the reality that war has always negatively affected those in its wake and killed and displaced masses of people. Wars, today, are mostly fought within countries, rather than between countries. Today, war is seldom about governments fighting other governments (although there are exceptions, for instance, the United States vs. Iraq). Historically, soldiers in uniform fought wars. Today, militarised civilians mainly fight wars with civilian populations suffering the main casualty. All of these various and interrelated elements are important to understanding the causes of child soldier recruitment.

The proliferation of small arms has had a devastating impact on modern warfare. The presence of armed conflict and access to small arms and light weapons has significantly contributed to the emergence of the 'modern child soldier.' Small arms are 'hand-held small calibre firearms, usually consisting of handguns, rifles, shotguns, manual, semi-automatic, and full automatic weapons, and man-portable machineguns.'¹²⁷ Light weapons 'includes a wide range of medium-calibre and

¹²⁶ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 6.

¹²⁷ Wikipedia, "Small Arms and Light Weapons" <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SALW> (Accessed on 04 Jan 2008).

explosive ordnance, including man-portable and vehicle-mounted antipersonnel, antitank and antiaircraft rockets, missiles, landmines, antiaircraft guns, mortars, hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs).¹²⁸ Small arms and light weapons (SALW) include most weapons up to 100mm in calibre, they are inexpensive, relatively low-tech and do not require substantial training. SALW are highly mobile and can be used by children as young as 10 years old. For example, widely used throughout Africa, the Russian AK-47 assault rifle, weighs under 11 pounds fully loaded, shoots 600 rounds a minute, has only nine-moving parts making it very easy to use even for children and costs as little as \$5 (depending on where and how it is purchased) making it an effective and extremely dangerous fighting tool.¹²⁹

After the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, many of the weapons that were previously guarding the Warsaw Pact found their way out of the Eastern European arsenals and into the developing world. Countries in the developing world, and Africa in particular, are flooded with plenty of cheap weapons (mainly from Eastern Europe, but also from other arms manufacturing countries), providing a market and the opportunity to arm challengers of government. The availability of inexpensive and mobile weapons provided the means to wage war easily. That was certainly the case in Africa, where in the 1990s, 46 out of 49 conflicts were low-tech wars only employing SALW.¹³⁰ Of the estimated 639 million small arms and light weapons in circulation throughout the world, it is estimated that approximately 8 million are in West Africa.¹³¹ The UN claims that SALW not only enable wars to start, but prolong conflicts and make them harder to resolve.¹³² In doing so, the proliferation of SALW contribute to the destabilisation of regions, intensify the violence, exacerbate human rights abuses and create what has come to be known as complex emergencies—a man-made humanitarian crisis, caused by armed conflict, that necessitates a system-wide response for international actors such as the UN.

Regardless of the specific motives behind wars, whether they are structural or related to issues such as greed or grievance, the widespread prevalence of armed conflict is inextricably linked to the proliferation and easy access to small arms and light weapons.¹³³ In 2005, it was estimated that more than 600 million SALW are in circulation, making small arms and an integral

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Information compiled from Singer, 46-48. And from Wikipedia.

¹³⁰ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 18.

¹³¹ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 25.

¹³² United Nations Development Programme, "Securing Development: UNDP's Support for Addressing Small Arms Issues," (New York: UNDP, 2005), 11-15.

¹³³ Ibid., 9.

component in armed conflict and violence worldwide.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the failure to effectively disarm warring societies after armed conflicts and the recycling of weapons in other conflicts makes SALW a continuous threat to international peace and security even after the conflict has formally ended.

Impact of War on Children

War has always had a devastating toll on civilians, and as a subset of society children are not exempt from that. War does a lot more than kill. It severely increases children's vulnerability, including their vulnerability to be recruited as a soldier in a number of alarming ways. War has catastrophic consequences on development and is often 'seen as a form of "developmental malaise."' ¹³⁵ War can quickly erase the gains of development, or reverse development.¹³⁶ War exacerbates and furthers the grip of poverty on a society. War, whether directly or indirectly through the diversion of funds, destroys economic, educational, health, sanitation and transportation infrastructures. Food insecurity often becomes a serious concern, which has a great toll on children in conflict zones due to malnutrition. It is common that populations are displaced either internationally as refugees or domestically as internally displaced persons further increasing the vulnerability of those populations. War divides societies allowing for ethnic tensions to either flare up or be manipulated for political purposes (whether it is for the recruitment of fighters or to distinguish between groups). However less visible, war can have a severe psychological impact leaving adults and children traumatised for many years. Due to a child's vulnerability to their environment, children often suffer tremendously as a result of armed conflict.

Over the past few decades, civilians have been affected by armed conflict at unprecedented and disproportionate levels and women and children are now specifically targeted. Wars in the 18th and 19th century and the first half of the 20th century yielded a significantly lower civilian casualty ratio than wars in the latter part of the 20th century.¹³⁷ World War II was the turning point where the figure of civilian casualties rose to 48 percent. Post-Cold War, it is estimated that up to 90

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, eds., 4.

¹³⁶ Paul Collier and others, *Breaking the Conflict Trap* (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2003), 7.

¹³⁷ UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 1996* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 13.

percent of the total casualties from armed conflict are civilians—most of whom are women and children.¹³⁸

UNICEF estimated that during the internecine conflicts between 1986-1996, 2 million children have been killed, more than 6 million children have been disabled or injured, over 1 million children have been orphaned, and an innumerable amount have been traumatised.¹³⁹ Between 2002 and 2006, of the 1.5 billion global child population two thirds of them live in countries affected by violent conflict. It is estimated, in 2007, children represented 41 percent of the 14.2 million refugees worldwide and 36 percent of the 24.5 million internally displaced populations due to armed conflict.¹⁴⁰ That is a total approximately 5.8 million child refugees and slightly over 8.8 million child IDPs worldwide. These statistics illustrate the victimization of children as a result of armed conflict.

Many of the characteristics of modern war and its diverse impacts increase children's insecurity— whether referring to the proliferation of SALW, the prevalence of armed conflict throughout the developing world, the negative impact on development or social, economic or political marginalisation. The mere presence of armed conflict and its consequences have a causal relationship on the recruitment of child soldiering. Crudely put, most young people become soldiers because there is a war or a struggle.¹⁴¹ In Africa, the prevalence of child soldiering in peaceful countries (and not struggling with the legacy of a recent war) is negligible. Children do not start wars, but they do fight in them when it comes to them. The likelihood of children being recruited as soldiers increases the more protracted and the longer a war lasts. Moreover, being displaced or living in a refugee or IDP camp can increase the vulnerability of children being recruited. While the more affluent one's family is, the less likely it is that their children will soldier as they are less able to send the children away from the conflict zone to safety.

¹³⁸ United Nations, "Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict " (New York: United Nations, 12 October 1998), 4-5.

¹³⁹ UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 1996* 15.

¹⁴⁰ UNICEF, "Progress for Children- a World Fit for Children Statistical Review," (New York: December 2007), 48. UNICEF, "Children Affected by Armed Conflict" www.UNICEF.org/progressforchildren/2007n6/index_41851.htm (05 Jan 2008).

¹⁴¹ Rachel Brett and Irma Specht, *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 9.

Why Child Soldiers Are Used

Children are used as soldiers for a number of reasons. Children can now be made into soldiers due to a number of reasons such as technological advancements of weaponry, their widespread availability, low cost, and the mere presence of armed conflict. Moreover, the primary reason child soldiers are used is because they can be made into effective fighters. If they served no utility to armed-groups, children would not be used as soldiers. Just like inexpensive and readily available weaponry, children are a force-enabler allowing previous unsustainable groups to gain the military capacity to sustain and fight their war.¹⁴²

The utility of child soldiers is motivated by convenience, pragmatism and economics. Children are malleable, obedient, cheap, exploitable, readily available and are seen to be expendable.¹⁴³ In war zones, children often represent a large percentage of the population, possibly more than half the population, providing a ready supply of recruits.¹⁴⁴ This not only makes it convenient and easier for armed-groups to recruit, but it gives them the sense that the child soldier is expendable. Moreover children are inherently vulnerable and often physically less able to protect themselves, making them easy targets for forced recruitment and en-masse round ups. Once recruited, children continue to be less able to protect themselves against abuse and mistreatment within the forces. Unlike adult soldiers, children's morality is less developed and they ask fewer questions. Children are impressionable and can be indoctrinated to do as they are ordered often through brutality, terror tactics or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Moreover, children are often happy to live off of plunder, and unlike their adult counterparts often do not demand payment. Until 1989, it was not illegal for states or non-state actors to use children as soldiers and until the late 1990's their use was not properly documented. Even today, few are held responsible for their recruitment and use of child soldiers due to the lack of enforcement mechanisms.

Recruitment Methods

How children are recruited into armed-groups is dynamic and 'disturbingly simple.'¹⁴⁵ There are certain groups of young people more at risk of recruitment than others—for instance, youngsters in proximity to armed conflict are at a higher risk to their peers in stable and secure environments, teenagers are more at risk than younger children because of their physical ability

¹⁴² Singer, 54.

¹⁴³ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 33-7.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 33-4.

¹⁴⁵ Singer, 57.

and prowess, and poorer children are at a higher risk because their families are unable to send them away to avoid recruitment. Although there are many different narratives how child are made or are turned into fighters, it happens either through forced or unforced means.¹⁴⁶ Regardless of whether the children are recruited through forced or unforced means, once part of an armed-group children are usually not free to disassociate themselves or exit the group voluntarily. In most cases deserting can be and is often punishable by death.

Forced Recruitment

Forced recruitment is quite straightforward. Some children are recruited through national service either through conscription or compulsory recruitment by states. Although it is illegal for countries to compulsory recruit under the age of fifteen years of age according to the CRC, several countries have a compulsory conscription age of less than eighteen years old either enshrined in their constitutions or through emergency powers.¹⁴⁷ Conscription is unique to states, as non-state armed-groups do not have a constitutional right to access to children as such.

In the context of modern civil wars and the modern child soldier, forced recruitment has come to mean much more than conscription or national service and by no means is it limited to governments. As a result of a shortfall of manpower or to bolster military capacity, both governments and armed non-state armed-groups rely on forced recruitment. Other methods of forced recruitment are generally more brutal than government conscription. These methods include forced abduction, forcibly rounding up children or press-ganging, and recruitment through a quota system. As governments and armed-groups are reluctant to admit they recruit child soldiers, the information about how this is done is often gathered through testimonials. Such methods have been documented by human rights organisations either as the recruitment happens or after the fact. Furthermore, once recruited children often have no choice but to follow their captures orders or the threat of death.

Forced abductions happen in many different ways. It is common for children to be collected in war zone or enemy villages after an attack and forced to join the attacking armed faction. They can simply be rounded up or may be forced to kill someone of their village in an attempt to sever ties to that community and further alienate that child into the faction's grasp. If they refuse to do as they are told, they may be threatened with their life. In these cases, often at gunpoint,

¹⁴⁶ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 31.

¹⁴⁷ For a list of countries that have ratified the CRC and the Optional Protocol see Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004*.

they are offered two options—to be abducted or killed.¹⁴⁸ Although different conflicts employ different recruitment methods, this is a common feature in many conflicts where children are recruited. There are many documented cases of children being forced to kill their parents, relatives or members of their communities in the threat of being executed themselves. This was quite common in Sierra Leone during the war for example. Many the armed factions take no prisoners and abduct anyone in their path.

Children are targets of abduction in war zones wherever forced recruitment is utilised. Armed groups send soldiers or recruiters to sweep market places, go to schools, orphanages, places of religious worship and anywhere that may have a large proportion of young people present to forcibly abduct children into their ranks. Street children, orphans and other already vulnerability children are often at higher risk of recruitment. Refugee and IDP camps have become recruitment grounds for armed-groups, partly because there is a large supply of children present and like schools and market places are often not policed and when there are security arrangements they are often inadequate to prevent such abductions.¹⁴⁹ Porous national borders do little to prevent the movement of soldiers and their new child recruits.

To access young people, some armed-groups will terrorise families and villages in order to force them to provide the armed-group with a certain number of young people or quota. The families and villages will often comply with the armed-group not out of desire, but out of fear of reprisal, attack or destruction. In many ways this is not too dissimilar to a form of non-state localised conscription. This quota system was used in places such as Afghanistan, Angolan, and Sri Lanka.¹⁵⁰ Like other means of forced recruitment, both governments and non-state actors are not the only perpetrators of this quota system method of recruitment.

Unforced Recruitment

Not all children become soldiers in armed conflict through fear death or the barrel of a gun.¹⁵¹ To fully understand how unforced recruitment works; one must have an appreciation of the context in which conflict exists. Often in and around war zones, there is a high level of poverty. There is systemic destruction of not only social and economic infrastructures, but of social and

¹⁴⁸ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 38.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 41-2.

¹⁵¹ A body of literature has emerged responding to the discourse of unforced or ‘voluntary’ recruitment. This section is not intended to be exhaustive, but a summary of the key issues.

economic opportunities as well as a sense of despair and hopelessness. With little or no rule of law insecurity is high. Local populations are often at the whim of both state and non-state armed-groups who despite proclaiming to be protectorates routinely loot, rape and pillage. Civilians are often further marginalised by conflict. In many ways the poorer you are (and more vulnerable), the higher price you pay. It is within this common context, of high insecurity and little opportunity, that children become party to conflicts through unforced means. Although it is undeniably an extremely dangerous route, children may find alternatives associating themselves with or joining armed-groups. By joining armed forces children, albeit through the barrel of a gun, can gain access to power, wealth, women and in some circumstances education or other things that are unobtainable in civilian life.¹⁵² Moreover, they may see their participation in war in very rational terms as their best hope of protection and survival.

There are several assumptions with regard to unforced recruitment that need addressing. This process is routinely referred to as voluntary enlistment, or describes children as volunteering into armed-groups. This is highly misleading. Rather than children exercising their free-will in an environment outside of conflict or with other options (lacking the stresses of war), they are heavily influenced by the environment they live in. This environment is often highly militarised and presents few opportunities. They may see joining an armed-group as the best opportunity for them to access those things that are not available to them as civilians. This is not to discount or negate that children have agency and are quite capable of making decisions freely. But with regard to the realities of war zones, seldom can children's lives be divorced of coercion or desperation. It can be seen as a continuum ranging from fully voluntary recruitment on one end to forced recruitment on the other end of the spectrum, within which only the extreme ends are fully mutually exclusive.¹⁵³ That being said, not all children in war zones choose to fight, and child soldiers represent only a very small percentage of the child population in conflict regions. Although some of the literature on child soldiers speaks of children volunteering to join armed-groups, the literature often undermines their agency and children's ability to make their own choice with regard to recruitment. Acknowledging that children may 'chose' to fight requires a different approach in the post-conflict phase.

Another common assumption made in the literature is that the plight of child soldiers is the worst among war-affected children.¹⁵⁴ The opposite is sometimes true. Child soldiers can often

¹⁵² Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 43-4.

¹⁵³ Happold, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 23.

provide themselves with basic needs such as food albeit through looting, while civilian children are at the whim of combatants. To portray this can be misleading, especially in light of the reality that many children join armed forces in a hope for survival and protection. These two common assumptions may be a product of the reality that much of the literature on child soldier is produced by activists who's underlying goal is to eradicate the use of child soldiers. Their literature is commonly used for their fundraising, and to show child soldiers as having free-will, having chosen to fight or not having the worst plight among children in war changes the highly emotive narrative and changes the perception of the issue. Moreover, if it was acknowledged that children were choosing to fight, the response to child soldiering would also have to be adapted and deepened.

Like most complex things, the recruitment and motives of child soldiers are not homogenous and often represent a combination of factors. There are push and pull factors that influence a child's unforced participation as a soldier. Once again, it is important to appreciate the context in which they live in. *Push factors* 'are negatives that children escape by joining an armed-group... [which can include]... abuse, boredom, physical insecurity, extreme poverty, and the humiliation associated with personal or family victimization and shame.'¹⁵⁵ *Pull factors* 'are positive rewards or incentives for joining armed-groups.'¹⁵⁶ Many children who join armed-group do so because of the perceived benefits. Having much influence over children, pull factors include a sense of family or support structure, a sense of protection, power, women, revenge, wealth, education, excitement or a sense of adventure, being part of something important and in a way giving their life meaning.¹⁵⁷ Whether it is to revenge the death or abuse of their family, or whether to gain access to wealth or women, these different elements of push and pull factors are common cited by former child soldiers as important reasons why they joined an armed movement.

Recruiters understand these complexities and are very aware as well as keen to manipulate these diverse factors in their favour. Also, the many reasons that children choose to fight are not static and may change as their participation evolves and deepens. For instance, a child may have initially joined to seek revenge for the murder of his family; although his/her motivation may change once exposed to the loot and perceived wealth. Moreover, children are seldom only

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 46.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

motivated by only one factor, as the reasons for fighting are highly contextual they can vary from individual to individual even within the same conflict.¹⁵⁸

The Experience of Child Soldiers

Once children join armed-groups and in order to adapt to their plight as a soldier they undergo a profound transition from their former civilian life.¹⁵⁹ They enter into a world of excess danger and heightened risk often governed by subjugation at the hands of their commanders. To survive, the children have to accept their group's rules and are often go through a re-socialization process. This re-socialization process and the child's acceptance of their situation vary depending on their method of entry into the group, the children's context and their role.¹⁶⁰ Youngsters who were abducted or recruited against their will are often controlled through terror or brutal means such as beatings. This terror may start under the fear of death when the child is abducted and forced to kill a family member or member of their community. It forces them into becoming highly obedient. While on the other hand, youngsters who were not forced into joining an armed-group often receive propaganda to engage them rather than beatings as a means of demanding obedience. However, they may still be beaten in order to discipline them.

Once within a group, children often receive some form of training or indoctrination. Training is primarily aimed at subjugating and re-socializing the recruits to the group rules, to a new set of behaviour and morality.¹⁶¹ This is an integral part of the process of turning children into an effective soldier and fighter. All armed-groups require obedience, as to break rules, especially in combat situations, could jeopardise the entire group. Some armed-groups teach their new recruits fighting techniques – such as how assemble and disassemble automatic weapons, how to shoot, and other combat tasks. However, most of the training is inadequate to protect or equip the soldiers against the danger they face in combat. Not all groups that use child soldiers give them survival or fighting training, and depending on the child's role it may not be necessary to receive training (for instance, cooks). In some situations children and adults receive similar training upon entry into the armed-group.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 55.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 57.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 57-58.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 58-71.

In spite of and to a large part being constantly exposed to abuse, death, killing and through the manipulation or denial of personal responsibility children are made into effective killers. Although some child soldiers struggle to embrace their new identity, many child recruits re-constitute their identity as fighters. They are forced into a context or new moral space, where brutality and killing is not only seen as normal, but is often encouraged and even rewarded. Fighters are given nicknames or combat names often inspired by their fighting style or level of brutality. Combat nicknames can hold a certain level of expectation (for example, if it is a name connoted with brutality), and can help to change the behaviour of the child soldier in order to conform to his/her nickname. For example, Liberian child soldiers were given nicknames such as “Ball Crusher” and “Castrator” based on how they treated enemy captives, something that probably meant that they continued such treatment of captives.¹⁶² The identities of child soldiers are very fluid and like most children are heavily influenced by their context, their surroundings, their peers and their survival instincts.

It is common for soldiers to be influenced by media. This influence can be in the form of political or religious propaganda or something more sinister. Child soldiers in Africa are frequently shown graphic Hollywood war films such as *Rambo* and *Platoon*. This is done in order to not only get them excited about combat, but to de-sensitise them to violence, show a macho image, help justify of the violence in the conflict, in addition to illustrate military command structures and basic jungle warfare.¹⁶³

Some armed-groups prohibited drugs and alcohol to be consumed by their fighters. Others encourage this practice and in some cases forced their soldiers to consume alcohol and drugs. The use of alcohol and drugs has been well documented by former child soldier testimony across the globe as a means of solidarity or social bonding and a tool to dull inhibitions. In many conflicts in Africa, for instance in Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone, commanders not only encouraged but forced their fighters to drink alcohol in the form of palm wine, cane-spirit, or beer, smoke marijuana and take amphetamines, locally known as ‘bubble’ or ‘brown-brown’ which was a mixture of cocaine and gunpowder.¹⁶⁴ The alcohol and drugs serve a few purposes— to instil courage, ferocity, and a sense of invincibility into the fighters, as well as to further help blur the distinction between right and wrong. The alcohol and drugs also helped keep the fighters dependent on their commanders who often controlled their supply and would

¹⁶² Ibid., 83.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 69.

¹⁶⁴ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 120.

distribute the alcohol/drugs before battle. During their participation in the war many of the fighters became dependant to alcohol and drugs.¹⁶⁵

Children's roles may vary according to their size, gender, ability, and the needs of their armed-group. For instance, one must be of a certain physical build to carry heavy loads or handle and carry a weapon. Children are often used in auxiliary roles—as messengers, porters, cooks, spies or as wives. Children are also often used as combatants—on the frontlines, as executioners, bodyguards or to guard checkpoints. Child soldiers often engage in looting, which many armed-groups rely on for their basic supplies and needs. It is not uncommon for children's roles to evolve over time. For instance, they may start out as a porter and soon be wielding a gun on frontlines. Some child soldiers never see the frontlines or combat, while others spend the bulk of their time fighting. The experiences of child soldiers are diverse, even within the same conflict. Some children fight reluctantly always looking for an opportunity to escape and rejecting to embrace their soldier identity, while others willingly take on their fighter identities and enjoy perpetrating war.¹⁶⁶ As every conflict is unique, the combatants' experiences within it vary.

War has huge impacts on civilian populations, as well as those directly involved in the perpetuation of conflict. In many ways the impacts that war has on child soldiers is similar to the various impacts that war has on the society as a whole and are not necessarily distinct from their adult counterparts. The structural elements such as the economic, educational, health and transportation infrastructures are usually left in ruins as a result of conflict. Houses, schools, hospitals, and farms are commonly burnt down or looted and people are often displaced or killed. Many if not most children receive no education and often receive no or inadequate healthcare during wars. By soldiering the danger of disease, physical ailments, such as being shot, stabbed, taken captive, deafness, being maimed and ultimately death is severely heightened. For example, in Sierra Leone 92 percent of the rebels were tested positive for sexually transmitted diseases.¹⁶⁷ Many child soldiers die as a result of their participation, exactly how many though is not known and this is not reflected in the aggregate number of child soldiers.

Like the general population, beyond the structural hardships and physical ailments caused by the war and their participation in it, child soldiers also suffer many psychological and social impacts.

¹⁶⁵ Yet despite this there was little alcohol and drug abuse assistance or programmes in the post-conflict peacebuilding stage.

¹⁶⁶ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 74.

¹⁶⁷ Herbert M. Howe, *Ambiguous Order : Military Forces in African States* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 6.

It is common for former child soldiers to experience varying degrees of trauma, shame, guilt, isolation and/or stigma due to their involvement in war. Trauma can be caused by the victimisation, witnessing and/or perpetration of violence or experiencing loss. This trauma can be severely debilitating if not dealt with effectively. To what extent a person is traumatised depends on their individual experience (both during and after war), exposure to hardship, their coping mechanisms, and resilience as well as their support structures. Although trauma can manifest itself differently, some common affects are headaches, dizziness, nightmares, nervousness, social isolation, difficulty concentrating, violent behaviour, inability to distinguish between fact and fiction, or substance abuse.¹⁶⁸ These are commonly referred to as the psychosocial impacts of war. Many traumatised former child soldiers experience difficulties adjusting their behaviour in post-conflict societies. That being said, not all children are affected equally and many exhibit a great deal of resilience to overcome these psychological issues.¹⁶⁹ Just as the children had to readjust to life as a soldier, the former soldiers must readjust back to life as a civilian. This process can be complex, take time and may also further isolate the ex-combatant. And these feelings and stresses do not magically disappear once they exit from the armed-group or the war ends. Addressing these psychosocial stresses is integral to the demobilisation and reintegration processes. This will be dealt with in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

The Girl Soldier

Just as child soldiers are a subset of armed-groups, girl soldiers represent a subsection of the child soldier group. Like their boy soldier counterparts, their reasons for joining, the roles that they fulfil, and the experiences are extremely diverse and complex even within the same conflict. Although this has improved over the last decade, the issue of girl soldiers has not received the same attention and acknowledgement as their boy counterparts despite them being present in almost every conflict where child soldiers are employed, albeit in smaller numbers than boys. Despite the Cape Town Principles explicitly including the girl soldier in their definition of a child soldier, they were virtually invisible in armed conflict, its analysis and early peacebuilding initiatives. However, there is now a body of literature and special practices dealing distinctly with girl soldiers. Just as there is danger in not fully understanding or addressing the reasons for participation, the roles, and the holistic impact that armed conflict has on children in general, the same is true for the girl soldier subset. The participation and experience of girl soldiers varies

¹⁶⁸ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 129-30.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 126.

from that of the boy soldier. These differences need to be explicitly addressed if peacebuilding is going to work.

Much of the early literature on girl soldiers only superficially dealt with the issue and did not take into account the holistic context of those girls' lives. The literature saw them inherently and exclusively as victims. Moreover, the literature over-generalises girl soldiers being abducted and taken as 'wives' for sexual exploitation.¹⁷⁰ Although it is true that girl soldiers and girls in war zones generally do suffer from high rates of sexual exploitation, by no means does this accurately address the complexity or dynamism of the issue. Although there are many differences between the experience of boy and girl soldiers, the logic behind their uses is very much the same. Girls are recruited for many of the same reasons boys are. Girls can be very useful to armed-groups as highly effective fighters, and they represent a large and ready pool of recruits that can bolster the military capacity of and support armed-groups. These factors result in girls being actively recruited. From a military perspective, a bullet fired by a girl, is just as dangerous as one fired by an adult or a boy soldier.

Conflict affects the vulnerability of all children resulting in girls, like boys, being recruited both forcibly and through unforced methods. In some cases, military service is compulsory for girls too (for example, Cuba and the Philippines).¹⁷¹ Just like boys, girls in and around conflict zones are rounded up through abductions, press ganging and quota systems. It was recorded that between 1990 and 2003, girls were forcibly recruited into armed-groups in twenty-eight countries.¹⁷² That being said, although sexual exploitation is often high and has been used as a weapon of war, it is not always a factor in the recruitment of girls. Heavily influenced by their environment and context, many girls choose to join armed-groups for a number of reasons. Many of the same push and pull factors, such as poverty, marginalization, abuse, or gaining protection; wanting to be rewarded with wealth and training are equal motivational factors to girl recruits. In the dangerous context of war, joining an armed-group may be seen as the best option for security, protection and accessing basic needs. However, like boys, regardless of how they are recruited, girls are not generally free to disassociate themselves with the armed-group once they have joined.

¹⁷⁰ Mazurana and others: 100.

¹⁷¹ Twum-Danso, 37.

¹⁷² Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 88.

Girls often fulfil as diverse roles as soldiers. They often carry out many of the same tasks that they would perform in society, things like cooking, cleaning and minding children.¹⁷³ However, beyond these societal roles, gender does not necessarily dictate the other functions and roles of girls within armed-groups. Although girls are often primarily portrayed as camp followers, porters, or sexual exploits, in addition to these roles girls also spy, guard checkpoints, fight on frontlines and can command other fighters. Small arms and light weapons have allowed girls to take up arms. Girls can be equally as effective and brutal as either boy or adult counterparts. It has been said that as girls often fulfil many overlapping functions (be it as a frontline fighter, wife, and/or cook) their roles are dynamic and should be seen in the larger political, social, and economic context of the conflict, especially in the post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives such as DDR.¹⁷⁴

Girls often suffer the same hardships and fear as their boy counterparts, although they have the added danger of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation. Many abducted girls are taken by boy and men soldiers as their 'wives' or concubines. These girls are effectively turned into sex slaves and are frequently raped and forced to have sex with the soldiers or face severe punishments or death.¹⁷⁵ Some girls enter into relationships with fighters and commanders to receive a degree of protection from being sexually assaulted by other men. Often there are complex dynamics regarding the relationships that are forged in conflict.

The sexual vulnerability and targeting of girls and women is a common feature in modern war. This can have a devastating legacy on the girls on these girls specially and on the community as a whole. Many girls get infected with sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV, syphilis and gonorrhoea, due to their sexual abuse and the promiscuity of wartime sexual exploits/relations. Moreover, it is not uncommon for many of these girl soldiers or soldiers' wives to give birth, which often comes with a number of complications. For instance, if the mother is HIV positive, the disease is often given to the baby due to inadequate medical care and attention. Once there is a baby in the picture, it becomes more difficult for the woman to break the relationship with the soldier or father (if she knows who it is) both emotionally and for very practical reasons such as financial support. In some circumstances there is negative stigma attached to giving birth to a war-baby. The reality of the sexual abuse of girls during armed conflict necessitates a targeted response in the post-conflict peacebuilding stage. Despite improvements in the international response, the implementation and protection of women in armed conflict has been weak.

¹⁷³ Mazurana and others: 109.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.: 111.

¹⁷⁵ Wessells, *Child Soldiers- from Violence to Protection* 89.

The Implications of Child Soldiers on War

The use of child soldiers has important implications, none of which are positive. The participation of children in armed conflict adds a new dynamic to force generation. Without the need to have a popular base of support or a strong ideology, children make potentially weak groups strong enough to wage and sustain war.¹⁷⁶ As it is now easier for armed-groups to generate force in order to perpetuate war, the prevalence of wars has also increased—thus resulting in increased insecurity. Beyond influencing the ease of starting war, the participation of children in wars also lengthen the duration of a war by adding to the fighting capacity of the armed-groups making it harder for military victories. Conflicts that use child soldiers are inherently more likely to have increased atrocities and civilian casualties. That is because child soldiers exacerbate the level of violence and atrocities within a conflict. Child soldiers do not know, nor do they respect any of the rules of war. Generally, it is civilians that bear the brunt of the violence committed by child soldiers, as we have seen resulting in civilians bearing the brunt of the atrocities and casualties. Moreover, the use of young combatants establishes a legacy of violence, which unless broken and addressed, makes it more likely that violence and insecurity will persist or return.¹⁷⁷ In sum, child soldiers make wars easier to start, more brutal, last longer, and harder to end. This last point emphasises the need for effective DDR of child soldiers.

The International Response to Child Soldiering

The UN took up the issue of child soldiers as it became clear that the nature of war had changed, the prevalence of civil wars increased, and children's participation in war caught the attention of the world. In 1996, with the support and pressure of NGOs, the UN General Assembly published the groundbreaking report titled 'Impact of Armed Conflict on Children.'¹⁷⁸ In this report the author Mrs. Graça Machel was tasked with examining five key issues related to armed conflict: (1) children's participation, (2) preventive measures, (3) the adequacy of existing standards, (4) measures to improve protection of children, and (5) the promotion of children's physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.¹⁷⁹ The report was groundbreaking not only because of its topic which had not yet been thoroughly explored, but because of its

¹⁷⁶ Singer, 94-115.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 109.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations, "Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children".

¹⁷⁹ Wessells, "Children, Armed Conflict, and Peace," 637.

impact on the emerging field. The Machel Report examined, investigating and exposed many of the complexities and hardships children bear as a result of war. The report brought much needed attention to and increased the UN's and policymakers' understanding of the issues relating to children and armed conflict. Moreover, it provided a blue-print and recommendations, placing the issue of child soldiers within the general context of children and armed conflict. Importantly, the UN implemented the reports recommendation by appointing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and establishing an office to support that effort.¹⁸⁰ By 1996 that the UN had become committed to improving its understanding about the impact armed conflict had on children, and since then has become extremely active in attempting to improve the plight of war affected children.

The mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) included: (i) Public advocacy to build greater awareness and mobilise the international community for action; (ii) promoting the application of international norms and traditional value systems that provide for the protection of children in times of conflict; (iii) undertaking political and humanitarian diplomacy and proposing concrete initiatives to protect children in the midst of war; and (iv) making the protection and welfare of children a central concern in peace processes and in post-conflict programmes for healing and rebuilding.¹⁸¹ Beginning in 1998, every year the SRSG-CAAC presented the UNGA with a comprehensive report documenting the office's activities and strategies, the context and plight of the world's children with regard to armed conflict, and provide recommendations to improve the situation. The work of the office of the SRSG-CAAC succeeded in elevating the international political profile of children and armed conflict, including and especially that of child soldiers.

In 1999, at the request of the SRSG-CAAC the UN Security Council placed the issue of children and armed conflict on its annual agenda. This initial debate resulted in UNSC Resolution 1261 which not only confirmed that the general issue of children and armed conflict and specifically the recruitment and use of child soldiers was of concern to the UNSC, but also to international peace and security.¹⁸² Setting the foundation for future resolutions, the UNSC recognises the impact that proliferation of arms on the security of civilians and children in particular, and called for an end of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Moreover, the resolution called on states

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, "Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children ", 74.

¹⁸¹ United Nations, "Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict," (New York: United Nations, 1 October 1999).

¹⁸² United Nations, "Resolution 1261 (1999)," (New York: United Nations, 30 August 1999).

to include provisions for child protection mechanisms during conflicts, in peace negotiations, and in post-conflict peacebuilding when and where relevant.

Since 1999, there have been six UNSC resolutions and five statements by the President of the Security Council each progressively stronger providing greater scope for engagement and mechanisms to deal with children and armed conflict.¹⁸³ The UNSC resolutions addressed a multitude of important issues. They provided much needed clarification as well as required action regarding: the development of international legal instruments; training of peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel; monitoring and reporting on the use of child soldiers; the need to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on children at war; called for addressing the links between the illegal trade in natural resources and small arms and children; mainstreaming children rights in peacekeeping, negotiations and peacebuilding; justice issues; and the punishment of those who recruit and use children soldiers.¹⁸⁴ The last two resolutions articulate the UNSC's concerns of the lack of progress on the ground in protecting children from the impact of armed conflict and call for the identification of groups that recruit and use child soldiers in addition to a time-bound action plan to stop such practices.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, as the UNSC resolutions represented the evolving interests, concerns and understanding of the severity of the problem, the UNSC went as far as developing country specific targeted sanctions and other graduated measures against those responsible for violating international law with regard to the protection of children and armed conflict.¹⁸⁶ Unfortunately this practice of naming and shaming has not been successful enough to halt the recruitment or use of child soldiers all together.

Besides providing a framework for the protection of children affected by armed conflict within a series of UNSC resolutions, the UN has spearheaded several other relevant initiatives relating to children and armed conflict—including the criminalization of the recruitment and use of child soldiers, assisting in raising the minimum age of recruitment through the CRC-OP and diligently

¹⁸³ United Nations, "Resolution 1314 " (New York: United Nations, 11 August 2000); United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," (New York: United Nations, 12 February 2008); United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," (New York: United Nations, 16 June 2010); United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," (New York: United Nations, 17 July 2008); United Nations, "Resolution 1379 (2001) " (New York: United Nations, 20 November 2001); United Nations, "Resolution 1539 (2004)," (New York: 22 April 2004); United Nations, "Resolution 1612," (New York: 26 July 2005); United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," (New York: United Nations, 28 November 2006); United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," (New York: United Nations, 29 April 2009); United Nations, "Resolution 1261 (1999)."; United Nations, "Resolution 1460," (New York: 30 January 2003); United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1882," (New York: United Nations, 4 August 2009).

¹⁸⁴ Lilian Peters, *War Is No Child's Play: Child Soldiers from Battlefield to Playground* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), July 2005), 28.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations, "Resolution 1539 (2004)."; United Nations, "Resolution 1612."

¹⁸⁶ United Nations, "Resolution 1612," 4.

monitoring the plight of child soldiers. In 1998, the codification and establishment of the International Criminal Court's statute represented an important moment and shift of legal frameworks. As a result of the creation of the International Criminal Court, the recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 was criminalised and was categorised as a war crime.¹⁸⁷ The International Labour Organisation ranked child recruitment and child soldiering as one of the worst forms of child labour in its Convention 182 (1999). The UN played an integral role in the creation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000) which raises the minimum age of recruitment to 18. In addition, other relevant UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNDP have been engaged and have aligned or mainstreamed their policies with regard to child protection. Despite the field progressing aggressively in a relatively short amount of time (since 1996), and the development of a framework for child protection there are still very many vulnerable children around the world and recruitment and use of child soldiers has not noticeably reduced.

The field of children and armed conflict has greatly benefited by the support of the donor community, the work of international as well as local NGOs, think-tanks and academics. NGOs have played a vital role not only in giving children and armed conflict international exposure, but also in helping design and deliver services on the ground to mitigating war's impacts on children.¹⁸⁸ NGOs have been responsible for documenting, and framing the context of the human rights abuses. Their literature often provides testimonials and manages to put a face to the human right violations endured.¹⁸⁹ The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers is a collaborative organisation that has emerged as one of the leaders with regard to child soldiering. The Coalition has quickly become the gate-keeper of statistical data on child soldiers, and has published general information, thematic reports, and Global Reports documenting every country's information on the recruitment and use of child soldiers. These organisations in many ways provide checks-and-balances of the UN as well as governments on the ground attempting to hold them to account for their actions positive or negative. Since 1996 academics have shown an interest in the area of children and armed conflict, and have helped better understand the situation through their publications. Although there is much repetition in academic and NGO literature, the analysis had overall contributed positively to the field.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations, "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," (17 July 1998), Article 8.

¹⁸⁸ NGOs such as Oxfam, Watchlist, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children, the Quakers, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Crisis Group, and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers amongst others.

¹⁸⁹ Jo Becker, "A Gun Is as Tall as Me" <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2004/01/20/gun-tall-me> (20 January 2004); Human Rights Watch, *Stolen Children: Abduction and Recruitment in Northern Uganda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003).

Conclusion

The use of children in armed conflict is by no means a new phenomenon. Since the late 1990's the use of child soldiers has gained the attention of policymakers, scholars the international media and human rights advocates. Although there is now a greater understanding about the reasons why children are mobilised as soldiers, how they are recruited and the roles they fulfil, all of which vary and are numerous, it is undeniable that children can be made into effective fighters. There are political, moral and ethical challenges presented in the use of child soldiers. When children are used as soldiers, wars are more violent, last longer and are harder to bring to an end. With varying degrees of success, this attention on child soldiers has translated into tangible responses on an international and national level in an attempt to try to protect children. It is in this context that the Liberian war was fought.

Chapter 3 – War and Peace in Liberia

Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, founded on 26 July 1847. Liberia is a small West African country bordering Sierra Leone to the west, Guinea to the north, and Côte d'Ivoire to the east. Geographically the country covers 43,000 square miles (approximately the same size as the State of Tennessee in USA or slightly larger than Portugal or Hungary) with a 340-mile coastline along the Atlantic Ocean to the south.¹⁹⁰ The country is well endowed with natural resources including timber, diamonds, iron ore, gold, and rubber. Before the outbreak of civil war in 1989, its population was approximately two and half million people.¹⁹¹ In 2007, its population was estimated at slightly over three million.¹⁹²

In order to understand the roots of the Liberian conflict, it is necessary to appreciate the nation's unique past, its political landscape, as well as demographic composition and previous attempts at peacebuilding. The antecedents of the Liberian civil war date back to 1847, when the country was founded by black American settlers who were sent back to Africa after the abolition of slavery. These ex-slaves represented only 5% of the population, estimated at 1.8 million in 1847.¹⁹³ They colonised Liberia and established a

¹⁹⁰ Statistics according to the Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberia> accessed on 17 June 2005.

¹⁹¹ The population varies between 2.1 million to 3 million people depending on source. The last systematic census was conducted in 1984 and cited the population at 2.1 million. Pham, 14. Other figures include: William O'Neill, "Liberia: An Avoidable Tragedy," *Current History* May no. (1993): 213. Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 13. Terrence Lyons, "Liberia's Path from Anarchy to Elections," *Current History* May, no. (1998): 229. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 21.

¹⁹² According to the CIA World Factbook, the estimated population is 3,195,931. CIA World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency, "Liberia" www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html (17 June 2005).

¹⁹³ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 14.

political system where they consolidated all political and economic control as well as used their power to subjugate the indigenous Africans.¹⁹⁴

Liberia's exclusionary history

The oligarchy of American settlers, known as the Americo-Liberians, established the True Whig Party (TWP) in 1870, 'which became a vehicle of total control over the state apparatus and oppression of the so-called hinterlanders [indigenous Africans/Liberians].'¹⁹⁵ Until 1904 indigenous Africans or non-Americo-Liberians were denied citizenship and until 1964 they could not own land or vote.¹⁹⁶ Indigenous Africans were commonly used as slave labour and were economically exploited. The Americo-Liberians elite physically tried to keep themselves separate from the Africans. They tried to prevent them from organising opposition amongst themselves in the hinterland (the inside of the country which was almost exclusively populated by Indigenous Africans). The hinterland was left undeveloped with poor roads, transportation and communication.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, Americo-Liberians set an early precedent, they used the Liberian army, then known as the Liberian Frontier Force, to subjugate the majority population by using force to quell dissent or disobedience.¹⁹⁸ The use of national armed forces to subjugate and terrorise Liberians continued until 2003.

Although the plight of the Indigenous Africans started improving slightly in the 1960's due to the superficial reform initiatives of two presidents (William Tubman (1944-71) and then William Tolbert (1971-80)) the TWP exclusively dominated politics uninterrupted for over 100 years. Liberia was '*de facto* both a one-party state and an apartheid state.'¹⁹⁹ Where the elite created a system that prevented social cohesion and used patronage and their political control to enrich themselves while ruling the country.

The 1970s was marked by economic decline which fuelled frustration among the majority of Liberians. The oil crisis of 1973 coupled with a decline in global demand for two of Liberia's main exports, iron ore and rubber, adversely affected much of the

¹⁹⁴ There were sixteen indigenous African ethnic groups: the Bassa, Belle, Dei, Gbandi, Gio, Gola, Grebo, Kissi, Kpelle, Krahn, Kru, Loma, Mandingo, Mano, Mende, and Vai. For more information see Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 21.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 15.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*: 76.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

population. The flow of international aid into Liberia declined from \$80 million in 1975 to \$44 million in 1976, while external debt rose from \$156 million in 1970 to \$600 million in 1979.²⁰⁰ In April 1979 President Tolbert made an announcement that sent the nation into chaos. He proposed a 50 percent price increase to rice, one of the staple foods. This price hike resulted in riots throughout the country, which were violently put down by the armed forces. As a result of the Rice Riots, a state-of-emergency was declared and habeas corpus was suspended. The government used this opportunity to purge the opposition, rounding up opposition leaders who were arrested and indicted of treason. Members of the armed forces seen to be sympathetic to the opposition were also rounded up and arrested.

Doe's Coup

The Americo-Liberian dominance in politics ended abruptly on 12 April 1980, when a group of seventeen low-ranking, barely literate, soldiers stormed the President's residence and killed all its occupants including President Tolbert.²⁰¹ One of the soldiers, a twenty-eight year old indigenous Liberian named Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe emerged as Liberia's head of state and announced the successful coup on the radio. On 22 April 1980, thirteen True Whig senior officials were publicly executed on a beach in Monrovia.

Initially indigenous Liberians were pleased by the change in power and the perceived end of their subjugation by the Americo-Liberians. Although President Doe enjoyed initial popular support, this enthusiasm was short lived when his regime proved to be corrupt, opportunistic, self-serving, and repressive. Doe was a member of the Krahn tribe (who represented slightly less than 5 percent of the population) and quickly consolidated control over the country by created a patronage system to help his fellow tribe, marginalizing just about everyone else (except the Mandigos who he formed a strategic alliance with).²⁰² A disproportionate number of senior posts in his administration, in the military and security forces were filled by members of the Krahn tribe loyal to Doe. Non-Krahn officials were either demoted or removed from their posts. Despite the country's dire economic situation, the military and civil servants received between a 100 and 150 percent salary increase to gain their loyalty and support.²⁰³ Doe created a repressive system where the Krahns replaced the dominance of the Americo-Liberians,

²⁰⁰ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 22. Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 18.

²⁰¹ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 22-5.

²⁰² Pham, 83.

²⁰³ Ibid., 81.

in what was seen by the majority of the population as a “changing of the guards” rather than a revolution for the indigenous Liberian or majority.²⁰⁴

During Doe’s regime, corruption was pervasive, human rights abuses rampant, independent newspapers were shut down and all forms of dissidence was outlawed and punished heavily. His consolidation of power was absolute. He isolated or arrested anyone with political ambitions or popularity. Notably, in late 1983 Doe saw General Quicwonkpa, a member of the Gio tribe, and one of the members of the 1980 military coup that removed President Tolbert from office, as a threat to his regime due to his growing popularity. Doe ordered a military raid on Nimba County which was a base of support of General Quicwonkpa. The raid resulted in scores of dead, villages being looted and razed, and hundreds of people fleeing the country, including General Quicwonkpa.²⁰⁵

From a Cold War perspective, in the early 1980’s the United States (US) lured Liberia away from Soviet and Libyan influences. Liberia quickly gained strategic importance to the US as a host of a military command centre (that could guide nuclear submarines), a re-fuelling point for US military planes and a powerful radio transmitter that relayed Voice of America broadcasts throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁰⁶ Doe’s regime greatly benefited as a recipient to US support as well as financial aid.²⁰⁷ Between 1980 and 1985, receiving nearly \$500 million, Liberia became the largest per capita recipient of United States aid in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁰⁸ In same period, the US was ‘responsible for a third of the Liberian government’s revenues.’²⁰⁹ In 1984, the Regan Administration of the US applied pressure to return Liberia to civilian rule, resulting in Doe organised presidential elections. As the founder of the National Democratic Party of Liberia, President Doe contested (and rigged) the October 1985 presidential elections. Unsurprisingly he won by a 51 percent margin, and his party won 84 percent of the legislative vote.²¹⁰ Marred by allegations of fraud and intimidation, Doe managed to hold on to power. As a civilian president he changed little, he continued to rule as a tyrant abusing human rights, taking

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 83.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 84.

²⁰⁶ O'Neill: 214.

²⁰⁷ Wippman, 162.

²⁰⁸ O'Neill: 214.

²⁰⁹ Pham, 89.

²¹⁰ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 19. and Pham, 86.

political prisoners, closing more newspapers, limiting freedom of speech and expression.²¹¹

On 12 November 1985, a month after the election that was neither free nor fair, there was a failed coup attempt. Exiled General Thomas Quiwonkpa, entering Liberia from Sierra Leone and proceeded to pre-emptively proclaimed on national radio that his National Patriotic Forces of Liberia (NPFL) had taken control of the government. Quiwonkpa's coup was motivated by the previous Nimba raids against his native Gio tribe, the rigged elections and general dissatisfaction towards Doe's regime. Doe quickly mobilised the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) violently quelled Quiwonkpa's revolt. In retaliation the AFL was used to further force to clamp down and punish supporters of Quiwonkpa discriminately killing approximately 3,000-4,000 Gio and Manos civilians from Nimba County, further exacerbating ethnic divisions throughout the country.²¹² "This single episode, more than any other, set the stage for the exploitation of ethnic rivalries that would eventually culminate in Liberia's civil war."²¹³

However, after Doe retaliated against the Gio and Manos in Nimba County President Doe's position became untenable. The US drastically reduced and started withholding aid to Liberia due to human rights abuses and lack of democratic governance. This withholding of aid, coupled with further economic decline (by 1989 Liberia's external debt was \$1.4 billion²¹⁴ and Liberia had defaulted on some of its international loans) and the decline of Liberia's strategic importance to the US due to the end of the Cold War further isolated the Doe regime. Sub-regional politics became complicated and over the years Doe became an unpopular and disliked leader throughout West Africa. In 1980, Doe had broken a promise to the Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny by assassinating Adolphus Tolbert (President Tolbert's son) who had been married to the President Houphouët-Boigny's god-daughter/adopted daughter.²¹⁵ Due to Cold War politics, in 1981, Doe broke ties with Libya in favour of the United States. Doe's snub, coupled with Muammar Qaddafi's revolutionary ambition and anti-American posture later prompted Libya to train and arm soldiers to revolt against Liberia's leader. In 1987, the new Burkinabe president, Blaise Compaore, became indebted to a small group of

²¹¹ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 19.

²¹² Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa- Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* 46. cites 3,000. Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone," 142. cites 4,000

²¹³ Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa- Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* 46.

²¹⁴ Pham, 82.

²¹⁵ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 53-54. Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa- Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* 48.

Liberian exiles (mainly Charles Taylor) for helping him in a successful *coup d'état* against Thomas Sankara. Both President Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire and Compaore of Burkina Faso later supported efforts to oust Doe.²¹⁶ It is said that political exclusion, economic decline, corruption, murder and ethnic rivalry propagated by the Doe's regime laid the seed for Liberia's civil war.

Outbreak of War

Approximately 168 soldiers from Liberia, Burkina Faso, Gambia as well as Sierra Leone who had received training in Libyan and Burkinabe military camps sparking the Liberian civil war with a Christmas-eve attack (24 December 1989).²¹⁷ Quiwonka's failed coup in 1985 and President Doe's retaliation on Gio and Mano civilians effectively not only placed Nimba County at the epicentre of Doe's opposition but also created a recruitment centre for future fighters, which Charles Taylor dutifully exploited in his 1989 insurgency against Doe. Many of these 168 soldiers were either supporters of Quiwonko or were themselves in exiled. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headed by Charles Taylor, aimed to liberate Liberia of its military leader turned civilian president, Samuel Doe.

A key feature of the Liberian conflict from the outset was the abandonment of all rules and conventions of war.²¹⁸ Civilians were explicitly targeted and recruited as soldiers by all parties involved in this conflict, which was quickly galvanised by ethnicity.²¹⁹ The NPFL entered Liberia through Côte d'Ivoire, and openly declared war against President Doe by invading his troops in Nimba County. Doe responded quickly by deploying units of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to the area. The AFL retaliated against the insurgency by punishing 'local villagers, killing, looting and raping, singling out people from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups whom they regarded as supporters of the invasion by reasons of their ethnic identity alone.'²²⁰ The government's retaliation in addition to the collective experience of Nimba County's Gio and Mano population supplied the NPFL with disaffected civilians ready to take up arms to avenge Doe's maltreatment. NPFL recruited civilians, resulting in their numbers instantly swelling into the thousands. By June 1990, six months after their initial attack, the NPFL had grown to almost 5,000

²¹⁶ Pham, 94-7. Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 65-72.

²¹⁷ Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa- Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* 46.

²¹⁸ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 21.

²¹⁹ Aboagye and Bah, 1. Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 76-7.

²²⁰ Ellis, "Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence," 166.

men, women and children and then doubled in three months.²²¹ Once armed, with little or no training, the new recruits targeted the Krahn and Mandingo populations perceived as Doe sympathisers. Many of the new recruits were children, who were readily integrated into the warring faction and organised into particular units known as Small Boy Units.²²² Due to Doe's lack of popularity and the brutality of the AFL's strategy which contributed to the large number of civilian recruits, Taylor's soldiers took control of Nimba County within a month. The war quickly spread beyond Nimba County, in a bloody attempt to capture Monrovia. However, Doe's military managed to maintain control of Monrovia creating a military stalemate for control of the capital.

Liberia's civil war soon became characterised by the fracturing and emergence of warring factions. Initially, the NPFL was the sole contending faction against the Liberian government. Leading their approach on Monrovia, under two separate military commands, the NPFL formally split into two factions. Taylor retained control of the NPFL composed of the new civilian recruits, the Small Boys Units, and soldiers supplied to him by the Burkina Faso's president. Prince Johnson (the former NPFL special force military commander) took control of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) which was composed of mostly trained soldiers. Although the NPFL and INPFL originated from a common entity they were not only fighting against government forces but between and amongst themselves. By 1996 there had been a total of six warring factions vying for not only control of territory, but of the defunct state. However, throughout the conflict Charles Taylor and his NPFL posed the biggest threat.

Enter ECOWAS

By August 1990, the Liberian conflict gained global attention. The West African sub-region was particularly worried. The conflict had caused thousands of deaths and forced approximately 700,000 to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.²²³ There was a clear need for not only humanitarian but also peacekeeping assistance. However, attempts to engage the United States and to United Nations to intervene failed. America's attention was focused on the Middle East, where Iraq had invaded Kuwait (August 1990) and the fresh memory of the failure of Somali intervention was on their mind.²²⁴ Furthermore, the United States along with Ethiopia and Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of

²²¹ Boas: 80.

²²² Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 79. It only became illegal in 1989 for States to recruit children as soldiers (under 15 years of age), and it was legal States to recruit children between 15-18 year old.

²²³ Ibid., 86.

²²⁴ Alao, 98.

Congo), the two African United Nations Security Council members, claimed the Liberian civil war was an internal matter, thus invoking sovereignty as a reason for non-intervention.²²⁵

From the onset of the war, members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had met to discuss a possible resolution to the conflict. On 7 August 1990, spearheaded by Nigeria's leader, General Babangida, and under Nigerian pressure ECOWAS voted to intervene militarily in the Liberian conflict. ECOWAS's intervention brought with it dynamics involving sub-regional rivalries. This intervention was initially seen as a peacekeeping force aimed at: ending the large scale killing and displacement of civilians; protecting property and foreign nationals; protecting international peace and security in West Africa; and restoring order to Liberia.²²⁶ On 24 August 1990, ECOWAS deployed its Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) to Monrovia. The 3,500 strong peacekeeping force (which was increased to 6,000) was led by Nigeria, with Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone also contributed troops.²²⁷ Although two of the three Liberian warring factions (Doe's government and Johnson's INPFL) welcomed the presence of the Nigerian-dominated peacekeeping force and the attempt to resolve the conflict, Taylor adamantly opposed ECOMOG's involvement in Liberia and vowed to attack the peacekeepers upon their arrival in Liberia. Taylor perceived Nigeria as a supporter of President Doe and ECOWAS's involvement as an obstacle to his political, economic, and military advances in Liberia.

Upon ECOMOG's arrival to Monrovia, the peacekeepers came under attack by Taylor's NPFL forces. Under attack, ECOMOG responded by defending themselves and within days managed to secure the first of many failed ceasefires. The ceasefire failed only days later on 10 September 1990, when President Doe was captured and killed by Johnson's INPFL while visiting ECOMOG's headquarters in Monrovia. Embarrassed by the capture and murder of Doe, ECOMOG replaced its commander and immediately switched their military posture from a peacekeeping to a peace-enforcement. ECOMOG went on the offensive against the NPFL in an attempt to defeat them. Meanwhile in October 1990, with Doe dead, the AFL and the INPFL signed an ECOMOG supported peace agreement creating an interim government. An academic, Professor Amos Sawyer,

²²⁵ Wippman, 165.

²²⁶ Ibid., 176.

²²⁷ Festus B. Aboagye and Alhaji M. S. Bah, eds., *A Tortuous Road to Peace* (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2005), 2.

was named interim President and the foundation was laid for further political negotiations. Although this peace agreement failed, it led the way to a series of subsequent peace agreements which inevitably also failed. The series of peace agreements excluded the NPFL (the main warring faction) and were flawed in various ways (such as not addressing disarmament or excluding key actors).²²⁸ By mid-November 1990, ECOMOG forces successfully pushed Taylor's troops out of Monrovia. This prevented the NPFL from its likely military victory. Monrovia became a non-NPFL enclave. By doing so, ECOMOG had engaged itself in the war against the NPFL.

From its inception, Taylor rejected the legitimacy of the interim government installed by ECOWAS which was protected by ECOMOG. Apart from Monrovia, by late 1990, NPFL controlled approximately 80-90% of Liberia, dubbed "Greater Liberia." Taylor was its *de facto* leader, and had continuous support from his initial sponsors—the governments of Libya, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire. Taylor established a parallel government based out of Gbarnga, the capital of Bong County. With control of the country and its territory came wealth from Liberia's vast natural resources. Taylor quickly started amassing a fortune from the production and trade of resources, which he used to run his parallel government and finance his war efforts. Taylor was courted by countries interested in acquiring its natural resources. It was estimated that between 1990 and 1994, annual exports of diamond, timber, rubber, gold and iron ore export averaged a total of \$422 million.²²⁹ As the troops received no salary, they quickly became motivated by loot, booty and plunder. Roadblocks were set up throughout the territory providing the soldiers with plenty of opportunity for extortion.²³⁰ Greater Liberia was patrolled by NPFL troops, many of whom were children. As the NPFL strived throughout Greater Liberia, the 'official' Liberian government controlled little territory outside of Monrovia and ceased to function as a state.

Taylor exported war to Sierra Leone. Taylor sought revenge against the Sierra Leonean government for providing a launching point for ECOMOG troops in 1990.²³¹ The NPFL supported and financed Sierra Leonean dissidents creating the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The RUF waged war against the Sierra Leonean government in

²²⁸ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 32-5.

²²⁹ US Ambassador William Twaddell during a US House of Representatives session in 1996 testified that between 1990 and 1994, Liberia's annual diamond exports was \$300 million, timber exports \$53 million, rubber exports \$27, gold exports \$1, and iron ore (between 1990-1993) \$41 million. Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 90.

²³⁰ Ibid., 89.

²³¹ Ibid., 93.

March 1991, and their invasion triggered the country's ten-year civil war.²³² The war in Sierra Leone quickly gained a logic of its own, mainly control of Sierra Leone's natural resources. In September 1991, Taylor's support of the RUF insurgency led the Sierra Leonean and Guinean governments supported and armed a proxy army, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), to fight against Taylor in Liberia. ULIMO was composed of mainly Krahn and Mandingos Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone, and were avenging Taylor's persecution of Mandingos in Liberia and the burning down of more than one thousand mosques throughout the country.²³³ Combatants that joined ULIMO were easily recruited and were united by their anti-Taylor position. Although ULIMO initially fought in Sierra Leone against the RUF alongside the Sierra Leone's government troops, they crossed the border and attacked the NPFL in Liberia. ULIMO quickly grew in strength as it joined forces and forged alliances in Liberia with the AFL, which were predominately Krahns. Just as Liberia was fighting a war by proxy in Sierra Leone through the RUF, Sierra Leone and Guinea were fighting in Liberia by proxy through ULIMO.²³⁴ Sierra Leonean and Guinean support of ULIMO further complicated the situation in Liberia as both countries had forces in ECOMOG in Liberia. There were allegations that ECOMOG helped arm ULIMO forces because they were united in their anti-Taylor stance.²³⁵

Operation Octopus

Fighting escalated after two years of failed ceasefire agreements in Liberia—including the Bamako Agreement of November 1990, the Banjul Agreement of December 1990, the Lome Agreement of February 1991, and a series of four agreements between June and October 1991 in Yamoussoukro.²³⁶ In October 1992, the NPFL invaded Monrovia in hopes of capturing the capital and engaged ECOMOG forces in what became known as 'Operation Octopus'. Taking ECOMOG forces totally by surprise NPFL heavily shelled Monrovia targeting ECOMOG headquarters, the interim government's headquarters, and the Nigerian embassy.²³⁷

Initially under-equipped and under-resourced ECOMOG defended themselves fighting alongside AFL and ULIMO forces, further raising questions of partiality of the

²³² Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 243.

²³³ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 94-5.

²³⁴ Ibid., 95.

²³⁵ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 32.

²³⁶ Alao, 26.

²³⁷ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 109.

intervention force. By the end of October, ECOMOG was able to bring the fighting under control and received reinforcements bringing the total number of troops to 10,000 (of which 7,000 were Nigerian).²³⁸ ECOMOG went on a strong offensive, counterattacking NPFL strongholds and strategic locations throughout the countryside. ECOMOG used (Nigerian) warplanes to bomb the airport, ports, and used its (Nigerian) navy resources to isolate NPFL controlled ports reducing the movement of resources and arms. By December 1992, even though ECOMOG had been successful in defending Monrovia, several thousand people had died as a result of violence on both sides.²³⁹

For the first time ECOMOG's counter-offensive against NPFL put Taylor's NPFL on the defensive. ECOWAS's bombardment allowed ULIMO and other factions to gain control of territories previously controlled by NPFL. This push resulted in the NPFL losing its control of the port of Buchanan in the east, Roberts International Airport in the outskirts of Monrovia, as well as Lofa, Bomi and Cape Mount counties (cutting off Taylor's access to Sierra Leone and his RUF sponsored allies).²⁴⁰ By July 1993, Taylor controlled only half of Liberia's territory instead of the 95 percent that he controlled in early 1990.²⁴¹ Moreover, it was estimated that by 1993, a total of 150,000 people had died as a result of the civil war, which by this point had gained the attention of the international media.²⁴² For the first time since the war began, the UN Security Council intervened in the Liberian conflict by passing resolution 788, which imposed a complete arms embargo on all the Liberian warring factions.²⁴³ The UN Security Council also established UN Observer Mission in Liberia (or UNOMIL) aimed at balancing the partiality of ECOMOG, protect Liberia's borders and enforce the arms embargo. Through a culmination of factors, most notably Taylor's losing his ability to generate funds to continue waging war and restricted access to guns; Taylor became interested in negotiating a peace for the first time. This resulted in the Contonou agreement signed in July 1993.²⁴⁴

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Specific figures vary from 3,000 to 6,000. See Ibid., 109; Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 99.

²⁴⁰ Pham.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., 112.

²⁴³ United Nations, "Resolution 788," (New York: United Nations, 19 November 1992).

²⁴⁴ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 100-1.

A Push for Peace

Although the Contonou agreement built on the failures of previous agreements it did not provide a lasting peace. That said, it was significant in a number of ways. Unlike previous agreements all the main fighting factions (NPFL, AFL and ULIMO) signed up to the terms indicating for the first time that all factions were willing to negotiate a settlement. Although the factions were allowed to keep the territory under their control, the agreement called for the dissolution of the interim government (which was pretty much ineffective since its inception) and established a power-sharing transitional government composed of representatives from the warring factions and the interim government.²⁴⁵ The agreement set a timetable for not only disarmament, but elections and a return to a constitutional government. As a result of this agreement for the first time the NPFL was part of the central government of Liberia and showed a willingness to disarm.

Unfortunately it was not too long before the Contonou agreement broke down and fighting continued, although less intensively. The transitional government outlined by the Contonou agreement was plagued by factional politics and disagreement. Resulting in a stalled attempt to form a transitional government, disarmament never genuinely happened. By August 1994, due to the lack of political will among the factions and the inadequately equipped ECOMOG forces only 3,612 combatants (out of the estimated 60,000) from the AFL, ULIMO, and NPFL had been disarmed.²⁴⁶ The attempt to broker peace was further complicated by the emergence of multiple additional factions due to shifting opportunistic alliances and ambitious warlords, which were not part of the Contonou agreement. In 1994, ULIMO split into two distinct factions along ethnic lines and waged war upon each other—Mandingo controlled ULIMO-K and Krahn controlled ULIMO-J. Taylor supported a NPFL splinter group, called the Lofa Defence Force, to locally fight ULIMO-K in resource rich Lofa County. After five years of fighting and multiple failed peace agreements, the Liberian conflict was more complicated than before. Old and new factions were fighting each other as well as sub-regional peacekeepers.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 101.

²⁴⁶ Pham, 114.

A shift in the region

Although ECOWAS acknowledged the need for a lasting peace in Liberia, they could not bring the war to an end either by political or military means. In late-1993, there were significant changes within the West African sub-region which had an impact on the Liberian conflict. Nigeria, ECOMOG's largest financier and contributor, was under new management. General Babangida a staunch supporter of ECOMOG's efforts and friend of former President Doe (which was a strong reason why he took an anti-NPFL/Taylor approach to the conflict) resigned from power.²⁴⁷ After a short-lived unelected interim government led by a businessman Ernest Shonekan, General Abacha assumed power over Nigeria. As Nigeria's chief of staff (Nigeria's second most powerful military officer) for eight years under Babangida, Abacha had been intimately involved in Nigeria's efforts with ECOMOG and immediately after assuming power pledged his commitment to helping resolve the conflict in Liberia.²⁴⁸ There was a change in policy and Nigeria took a more pragmatic approach, one that was less confrontational. The change in power meant that the personal animosity between Babangida and Taylor was no longer an issue.²⁴⁹ There was also a new leader in Côte d'Ivoire. The death of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny 'depersonalised the conflict and removed the family reasons for which Abidjan had initially backed Charles Taylor and opposed Doe.'²⁵⁰ Côte d'Ivoire's new president, Henri Konan Bédié, immediately distanced itself from the NPFL and pledged better cooperation with ECOWAS to end the war. Ghana, ECOMOG's second largest contributor, was growing more concerned as well as frustrated by with the lack of progress in Liberia when it was appointed as ECOWAS's Chairman. For the first time, the governments of Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana shared the common interest of seeing a resolution to the Liberian conflict. And they saw conciliation with Charles Taylor as an avenue to arriving at that resolution.²⁵¹

With renewed interest, Ghana brokered the Abosombo Agreement in September 1994 while fighting raged throughout Liberia. The agreement was meant to supplement the failed Contonou agreement and clarify obstacles. The main elements of this agreement addressed decision-making structures, and called for the Armed Forces of Liberia to be reformed to address the nation's post-conflict challenges.²⁵² The agreement set up a

²⁴⁷ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 132-5.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 135.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 132.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 135.

²⁵² Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 72-4.

decision-making body composed of a five member Council of State— comprised of representatives of NPFL, ULIMO-K, ULIMO-J, the Coalition (composed of LPC, LDF, the CRC-NPFL and the AFL), the Liberian National Conference, and one representative elected by the electoral college of the transitional government. The Abosombo Agreement also created nine ECOMOG-protected safe havens throughout Liberia (Monrovia, Gbarnga, Buchanan, Greenville, Harper, Totota, Tubmanburg, Voinjama, and Zwedru).²⁵³ However like all previous attempts, this agreement failed due to lack of cohesion amongst the warring factions and over-ambitious desires. The failure of the Abosombo Agreement led to negotiations resulting in the Abuja Accords (beginning in August 1995) which finally concluded the fighting and outlined for elections to be held the following year.

The Abuja Accords

As the leader of the strongest faction and greatest spoiler, Charles Taylor, was heavily courted by Nigeria's President Abacha. In June 1995 they had come to an agreement that gave promise to a lasting ceasefire.²⁵⁴ Under Nigerian influence, the heads of states from all the nine ECOWAS nations, all the Liberian warlords, as well as representatives of Tanzania and Uganda (who had contributed troops to Liberia's peacekeeping efforts) met in Abuja to discuss a possible solution to the Liberian conflict. Building on the failure of previous attempts (twelve failed agreements), they negotiated and signed an agreement (in August 1995) that had the consensus of all participating parties.²⁵⁵ The main obstacles preventing previous agreements were overcome. A six-member Council was created, with a chairman and five vice-chairmen of equal status, which included the three most powerful warlords—Taylor (NPFL), Kromah (ULIMO-K), Boley (the Coalition). Placing the head of the main fighting factions on the Council gave it the authority that previous reconciliation attempts lacked.²⁵⁶ The agreement gave the factions joint control of the Liberian government, 'encouraging them to pursue by political means the interests which they had previously contested in battle.'²⁵⁷ The agreement stipulated that in the coming elections (scheduled for 20 August 1996), all members of the council could run for office as long as they resigned from the council three months before the elections (except the chairman—who was a fairly unknown player).²⁵⁸ Like its

²⁵³ Pham, 124.

²⁵⁴ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 165.

²⁵⁵ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 105.

²⁵⁶ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 78.

²⁵⁷ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 106.

²⁵⁸ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 167-9.

predecessor, the Abuja Accord outlined the deployment of ECOMOG and UN observer forces throughout Liberia (UNOMIL). This agreement contained the best effort to address a disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration plan which would take place between October 1995 and February 1996. Moreover, for the first time, all the faction leaders agreed what the DDR process should entail.²⁵⁹ The factions provided a list of 59,370 fighters that would participate in the disarmament process (this inflated figure was later reduced to cover 33,000 fighters).²⁶⁰

Although the Accord showed much promise when the Council was inaugurated in Monrovia, like previous peace agreements fell short of their expectations as fighting erupted again. Like on the battlefield, Taylor tried to usurp political power through his role in the Council. In violation of the Abuja agreement and as disarmament began, localised fighting erupted. An incident where ULIMO-J troops led by Roosevelt Johnson attacked ECOMOG forces in Tubmanburg in December 1995, led to an escalation of fighting.²⁶¹ Sixteen Nigerian peacekeepers were killed, seventy-eight were wounded and lots of heavily weaponry was seized. After weeks of fighting, this caused ECOMOG to demand the return of its weapons while retreating from Tubmanburg and suspending its plans to deploy troops throughout Liberia to implement the scheduled disarmament processes. ECOMOG would not put its troops in harm's way, without the main warlords guaranteeing their safety. In the east, cross-border attacks occurred as fighting spilt into Côte d'Ivoire.

Responding to ECOMOG's demands, the executive council of ULIMO-J removed Roosevelt Johnson as its chairman (and replacing him with William Karyee) and demanded the return of the weapons seized. This caused a further breakdown of security and brought Monrovia under attack when in April 1996; the Council of State condemned ULIMO-J's attack on ECOMOG troops and ordered the arrest of Johnson. Taylor and Krohmah ordered their NPFL and ULIMO-K troops to assist with the arrest Johnson which led to all out war between NPFL and ULIMO-K forces against Johnson loyalists within ULIMO-J, AFL, and LPC. The NPFL troops took the opportunity to looted Monrovia in what they called 'Operation Pay Yourself' resulting in the seizure of 322 UN vehicles and 167 NGO vehicles worth \$4.9 million and \$3.2 million respectively.²⁶² When

²⁵⁹ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 79.

²⁶⁰ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 168.

²⁶¹ The incident was instigated by Taylor who manipulated Roosevelt Johnson (and his ULIMO-J) to attack ECOMOG and then turned on him. Ibid., 184-6.

²⁶² Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 108.

the fighting had subsided in late May 1996, Taylor had regained control of some resource rich areas in the south-east and around Kakata and an estimated 3,000 people had died in the fighting, mostly civilians.²⁶³

Embarrassed by the latest outbreak of fighting, Nigeria replaced its ECOMOG commander and once again brought everyone to the negotiation table to restore the peace timetable agreed upon in Abuja.²⁶⁴ On 17 August a new timetable was agreed upon, known as Abuja II. The agreement brought the first Abuja Agreement back on track as well as outlining a very clear schedule for disarmament beginning August 1997 and national elections being held in May 1997 with the elected government being sworn in no later than 15 June 1997.²⁶⁵ Shortly thereafter, ECOMOG and UNOMIL forces were reinforced. Although slightly delayed by March 1997, 21,315 fighters had disarmed and 9,570 weapons and 1.2 million rounds of ammunition were collected.²⁶⁶

Taylor had realised that he would not be able to wrestle control of Liberia by force alone, and led the trend to turn his war machine in a political entity to compete in the upcoming election. To be eligible to contest the presidential elections, 28 February 1997, the three main warlords—Taylor Kromah and Boley resigned from the Council of State and converted their factions into political parties. Taylor's NPFL became the National Patriotic Party (NPP), Kromah's ULIMO-K became the All Liberian Coalition Party (ALCOP), and Boley's Coalition became the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL). Taylor had the most sophisticated approach and an advantage. He had for many years controlled a shadow government of 'Greater Liberia' and already controlled media outlets such as radio stations which broadcasted throughout Liberia.²⁶⁷

Postponed by two months, with international support Liberia went to the polls on 19 July 1997 in which 85 percent of the eligible population of 750,000 voted.²⁶⁸ The international community (the United Nations, many of its member states as well as international observers) hailed the poll as Liberia's fairest election in history.²⁶⁹ The elections were declared free and fair. Charles Taylor and his NPP party won the elections by a land-slide. Taylor received 75 percent of the presidential vote, and his NPP party

²⁶³ Pham, 129-130.

²⁶⁴ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 109.

²⁶⁵ Pham, 130.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 131.

²⁶⁷ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 104-5.

²⁶⁸ Pham, 133.

²⁶⁹ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 109.

won a decisive majority in both the Senate and House of Representatives (twenty-one out of twenty six seats and forty-nine of sixty-four seats respectively).²⁷⁰ Apart from being a charismatic leader who appealed to young voters, the citizenry had voted for Taylor because of their desire for peace. They knew that if he did not win the elections, he would likely re-arm and return war to Liberia.²⁷¹ So after 7 year of fighting, and ECOWAS's attempt to prevent what became unavoidable, Taylor became Liberia's president.

Mechanics of War

From the very start of the war, civilians suffered the highest casualties. The conflict inflicted damage on every Liberian, whether it was through displacement, malnutrition, or direct exposure to combat. The cost of the war was tragic in every sense of the term. Civilians were recruited as fighters by every faction, and waged war on their fellow Liberian citizens. Ethnicity was galvanised and manipulated by the various factions to fuel the fires of war. Human rights abuses were committed by all participating faction, including ECOMOG.²⁷² Civilians were the main targets of the war and an estimated 200,000 deaths occurred. More than half of the population was displaced resulting in the flight of between 700,000 and 1.75 million people (depending on the source).²⁷³ Liberia was looted and its citizens were not only terrorised but also traumatised. Politically, the Liberian war plagued the West African region and entangled the sub-region in to a complex war fuelled by personal animosity. ECOWAS's legitimacy was severely questioned due to its actions as both peacekeeper and peace-enforcer. The entanglement and involvement of the ECOWAS nations (such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria) illustrated the highly personalised nature of the regional dynamics. Nigeria suffered the loss of approximately 500 soldiers and spent an estimated \$8 billion on the intervention efforts.²⁷⁴

Taylor as president

When President Taylor was inaugurated there was the gigantic task of rebuilding Liberia after its devastating war. Taylor dutifully pledged to promote national unity, to reconcile

²⁷⁰ Pham, 133-4.

²⁷¹ This is argued by just about many authors, including Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 105. Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 109. Pham, 134-5.

²⁷² Cain; Ellis, "Liberia's Warlord Insurgency "; Human Rights Watch, *Waging War to Keep the Peace: The ECOMOG Intervention and Human Rights* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993); Pham.

²⁷³ Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder*, appendix 2.

²⁷⁴ IRIN, "West Africa Update #580," IRIN 26 October 1999.

Liberia's people, to respect human rights, and re-establish peace and security both at home and abroad.²⁷⁵ Although Liberia was relatively stable and peaceful between 1997 and 2000, President Taylor made little effort to genuinely accomplish any of these goals. This included any efforts to reintegrate former soldiers (many of whom were his former enemies). Apart from ensued discontent, this failure to reintegrate former combatants and soldiers proved to be a strong factor in the remobilisation of factions against him. Months after his inauguration he abandoned these goals in favour of consolidating his power and control over Liberia. He fell out with the ECOMOG commander over the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia as outlined in the Abuja Accords, which ultimately resulted in full withdrawal of ECOMOG by the end of 1998. In a move that mirrored his political predecessors, Taylor did not honour his commitment to restructure the Armed Forces of Liberia based on national interests and instead replaced all 2,500 Krahn soldiers with veteran NPFL soldiers.²⁷⁶ Taylor created the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) which was an institutionalised militia of Taylor-loyalist. Taylor used the security services to consolidate his power and repress dissent.

Taylor was unable and unwilling to convert himself from a warlord to a statesman. Under the guise of president, Taylor continued to loot Liberia. He ran the country as though it was his own fiefdom, which it quickly became. Through his own actions, Taylor became Liberia's greatest obstacle to long-term security, stability and prosperity.²⁷⁷ Taylor took control of Liberia with a \$2 billion external debt and dysfunctional government institutions.²⁷⁸ Although the UN, IFIs and donors were expected to perform the bulk of the socio-economic reconstruction of Liberia, Taylor's actions further isolated Liberia (including from the very parties would intended to lend their support). Due to corruption, human rights abuses and Taylor actions Liberia never receive the necessary assistance to rebuild the devastation caused by the war. Although the UN established a Peacebuilding Office in Liberia in 1997, it was rendered ineffectual due to its limited resources. The UN Peacebuilding Office was heavily criticised for being too pro-Taylor and too non-intrusive.²⁷⁹ Development efforts and reconstruction completely stalled. Although people started to resettle throughout Liberia, the economic situation of the average Liberian did not improve much. By most socioeconomic indices, by 2003,

²⁷⁵ Pham, 176.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 177.

²⁷⁷ Charles Ukeje, "State Disintegration and Civil War in Liberia," in *Civil War, Child Soldiers and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in West Africa*, ed. Amadu Sesay(Ibadan, Nigeria: College Press & Publishers, 2003), 100.

²⁷⁸ Lyons: 232.

²⁷⁹ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 232.

the average Liberian was worse off than at the start of the civil war in 1989, and Liberia was second-to-last at the bottom of the UNDP's Human Development Index (174 of 175 countries).²⁸⁰

As Taylor misgoverned Liberia, Sierra Leone was still engulfed in its civil war (which was supported by Taylor). Although ECOMOG forces were deployed in neighbouring Sierra Leone, by 1999, the war had taken the lives of 7,000 civilians and displaced more than two-thirds of the four million population.²⁸¹ Taylor consolidated his place in the international forum as a pariah, when in March 2001, he was sanctioned by the UN Security Council (UNSC) for his continual support of the Sierra Leonean rebel group.²⁸² An arms embargo was placed on Liberia, because of its role in funding the war efforts in Sierra Leone. In an attempt to restrict Taylor's ability to support the Sierra Leonean (RUF) war efforts, the sale of Liberian diamonds was outlawed, senior members of the Liberian government were placed on an international travel ban and their international assets were frozen. Timber was added to the sanctions list in 2003, which also adversely affected Taylor's regime.²⁸³

In response to their dissatisfaction with Taylor's regime, and in particular, his continual support of the RUF in Sierra Leone, a group of exiled Liberians formed a fighting force called the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) in February 2000. Many of members were former fighters of the mainly Krahn, Mandingo and former-AFL, ULIMO-K, ULIMO-J and LPC fighters. LURD originally found support within Sierra Leone, but then moved their activities to Guinea after gaining the support of President General Lansana Conté.²⁸⁴ General Conté and Taylor had an acrimonious relationship dating back to 1990, even before the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia.²⁸⁵ In July 2000, from the border towns of Guinea, LURD invaded Liberia (Lofa County) but were fought back.²⁸⁶ Taylor retaliated by organizing a dual invasion into Guinea by RUF forces in Sierra Leone and militia forces in Liberia. This led to sporadic fighting in Liberia and Guinea that later escalated into Liberia falling into civil war in 2002. Liberia had once again become a 'textbook case of all the major warning signs of a deteriorating

²⁸⁰ Pham, 180.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 164.

²⁸² United Nations, "Resolution 1343," (New York: 7 March 2001).

²⁸³ United Nations, "Resolution 1521 (2003)," (22 December 2003).

²⁸⁴ Pham, 181.

²⁸⁵ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 234.

²⁸⁶ Pham, 181.

situation across a range of political, military, economic and social fronts.²⁸⁷ Taylor had done little to correct any of the political legacies of the previous regimes. Liberia was economically weakened by Liberia's isolation as well as the desperate state of its economy which further suffered from the UN Security Council sanction. Unemployment was rampant, estimated at between 75 and 80 percent.²⁸⁸ Ethnic tensions were high due to Taylor's consolidation of power and marginalization of Krahns and Mandingos.

The Civil War Re-Starts

In 2001, Taylor mobilised and deployed 15,000 former NPFL fighters to Lofa County to repel the rebel LURD forces.²⁸⁹ The resumption of hostilities was a result of 'ignored and unfinished business of the earlier civil war.'²⁹⁰ All forces heavily recruited former fighters. The recruitment was made easier by the lack of reintegration and restructuring of the army in 1997-2000 and the marginalization of fighters not loyal to Taylor (non-NPFL fighters). Once again, civilians including many children were recruited into Taylor's faction, and later into the LURD forces.²⁹¹ And once again, human rights abuses, displacement, looting, and pillaging quickly became so prevalent, they became the norm. Fighters were not paid, and they relied on looting and booty to pay themselves. Initially the fighting was concentrated in Lofa County, but by mid-2002 much of Liberia was engulfed in full-fledged civil war, with civilians paying the biggest price. Taylor's forces were defending itself against LURD's attacks and for control of strategic locations. Although Taylor was weakened by the arms embargo, he smuggling arms into country.²⁹² Although LURD was receiving support and arms from the Guinean government they were not able to defeat the Taylor's forces outright.

In early 2003, due to lack of trust between the Mandingos and Krahns, LURD splintered into two factions. The Krahns in LURD formed a new faction called the Movement for Democracy in Liberia or MODEL. MODEL is a descendant of the old ULIMO-J faction, and was given support (logistical and armaments) by Côte d'Ivoire due to the suspicion that Taylor was supporting the rebels fighting against the government.²⁹³ Just as the Guinean government explicitly supported LURD's war efforts, the Ivorian

²⁸⁷ International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Unravelling* (Freetown/Brussels: ICG, 2002), 1.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 6.

²⁸⁹ Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 244.

²⁹⁰ Ukeje, 86.

²⁹¹ International Crisis Group, 4.

²⁹² Pham, 185.

²⁹³ Boås: 85-6; International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Security Challenges* (Freetown/Brussels: ICG, 2003), 10-11.

government explicitly supported MODEL's efforts against the Liberian government.²⁹⁴ Despite their differences, LURD and MODEL remained allied and did not engage each other in war. Their common enemy was Taylor and his forces who were now engaged in a two-front war. LURD attacked the government from the north and west, while MODEL concentrated its attacks in the south-east of the country.

By April 2003, the fighting in Liberia was fierce. LURD and MODEL were making ground against Taylor's government forces. LURD had captured Tubmanburg and the main roads leading into Monrovia, while MODEL had captured Buchanan which was the main port of the timber exportation. On May 6, the UN Security Council once again cited Taylor's government on their lack of compliance to their embargos (the banning of the sale/purchasing of arms, diamonds, and an international travel ban of Taylor and associates), and added the importation of Liberian timber to the embargo.²⁹⁵ That being said, the UN or the donors initially had not been too vocal about the war, nor did they strongly condemn the rebels (LURD and MODEL) for their part in it. Some suspected that was because the United States, the United Kingdom, and France were indirectly arming and supporting the rebels.²⁹⁶ By May 2003, 60 percent of Liberia's territory was under the control of either LURD or MODEL forces.²⁹⁷

Another Push for Peace

It was the sub-region, under ECOWAS, that once engaged Liberia in an attempt to resolve the conflict in June 2003. As ECOWAS's chief mediator and former Nigerian head of state, General Abubakar, persuaded all the factions (Taylor, LURD and MODEL) to meet in Accra, Ghana to discuss a peace agreement. However, shortly after arriving Taylor promptly fled Ghana and returned to Monrovia after the sealed indictment and arrest warrant of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) was made public on 4 June.²⁹⁸ The peace talks in Accra continued in Taylor's absence and his representative (Daniel Chea, Defence Minister), and representatives of both LURD and MODEL signed a ceasefire agreement on 17 June.²⁹⁹ The ceasefire granted access to ECOWAS and the UN on humanitarian grounds, called for the establishment of an

²⁹⁴ International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Security Challenges*, 9-12.

²⁹⁵ United Nations, "Resolution 1478," (New York United Nations: United Nations, 6 May 2003).

²⁹⁶ Boås: 86.

²⁹⁷ Pham, 186.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 186-7.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 187.

international stabilization force and political reconciliation (which included DDR, restructuring of the armed forces, socio-economic reforms, and democratization).³⁰⁰

Despite the ceasefire and emboldened by the Taylor's indictment, fighting intensified as LURD made an offensive to capture Monrovia. In the weeks that followed, the capital suffered heavy bombardment, extensive civilian casualties and severe displacement.³⁰¹ These attacks on Monrovia, which came to be called World War One (4 June), World War Two (25 June) and World War Three (18 July) were characterised by mortar attacks, heavy machine gun fire and the use of AK-47s.³⁰² LURD had captured half of Monrovia and was separated by a bridge that divides the city. On 26 July, United States President, George W. Bush, publicly declared the US's support of the 17 June ceasefire agreement, and stated that

"Taylor needs to step down so that his country can be spared further bloodshed. All the parties in Liberia must pursue a comprehensive peace agreement. And the United States is working with regional governments to support those negotiations and to map out a secure transition to elections. We are determined to help the people of Liberia find the path to peace."³⁰³

This statement and show of support set the next step of the consolidation of peace in Liberia into motion. With the political and logistical support of the UN on 4 August ECOWAS deployed a 3,600 strong multinational peacekeeping force to Liberia.³⁰⁴ It was called ECOWAS Mission in Liberia or ECOMIL and its mandate was to support the implementation of the 17 June ceasefire agreement until a larger UN peacekeeping force could be deployed which would happen no later than 1 October 2003.³⁰⁵ Unlike ECOMOG, its predecessor, ECOMIL had political clarity as well as a very clear mandate, support among not only regional actors (such as Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Nigeria) but also international support (such as the US who helped logistically with the deployment of troops and the UN) and an exit strategy.³⁰⁶ Under an agreement with Nigeria's President Obasanjo on 11 August 2003, President Charles Taylor resigned and went into exile in Calabar, Nigeria. And after three months of hard negotiations between the Government of Liberia, LURD, and MODEL signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra on 18 August 2003 effectively ending Liberia's prolonged civil war.

³⁰⁰ ECOWAS, *Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement of Democracy in Liberia* (17 June 2003). accessed on 12 November 2006.

³⁰¹ International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Security Challenges*, 5.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ George W. Bush, "President Bush Outlines His Agenda for U.S. - African Relations," (Washington DC: 26 June 2003).

³⁰⁴ Aboagye and Bah, eds., *A Tortuous Road to Peace*, 11.

³⁰⁵ United Nations, "Resolution 1497," (New York: United Nations, 1 August 2003).

³⁰⁶ Aboagye and Bah, eds., *A Tortuous Road to Peace*, 11-13.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) built upon the failings of the previous peace agreements and set the outline for peacebuilding activities in Liberia. It called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the establishment of a National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) a power-sharing transitional government that would stay in power for a period of two years until democratic elections could be held (15 October 2005), the establishment and deployment of an International Stabilisation Force under UN Chapter VII authority, it called for the implementation of a comprehensive DDR programme (highlighting the special needs of children), and provided for other peacebuilding activities such as the establishment of a governance reform commission and an anti-corruption commission.³⁰⁷

In September 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1509, establishing the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and authorising the deployment of 15,000 peacekeeping troops and civilians personnel for an initial period of twelve months starting on 1 October 2003.³⁰⁸ UNMIL's mandate was to support the implementation of the CPA and the peace process; protect UN staff, facilities and civilians; support humanitarian and human rights activities; as well as assist in national security reform, including DDRR, national police training and formation of a new, restructured military.³⁰⁹ Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that in due course 'UNMIL would be a multidimensional operation composed of political, military, police, criminal justice, civil affairs, human rights, gender, child protection, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, public information and support components, as well as an electoral component.'³¹⁰ Retired US Air Force Major-General Jacques Paul Klein was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia (SRSG) to head UNMIL. And on 1 October, UNMIL became operational. ECOMIL forces were transferred to UNMIL command and got fitted with the traditional blue berets of UN peacekeepers.

Fighting in Liberia had ceased and on 14 October the NTGL, including the power-sharing National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA) and ministers, were inaugurated and took power. The NTGL was headed by Chairman Charles Gyude

³⁰⁷ "Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties," (Accra 13 August 2003).

³⁰⁸ United Nations, "Resolution 1509 (2003)," (15 September 2003).

³⁰⁹ UNMIL, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmil/index.html> (15 November 2005).

³¹⁰ Ibid.

Bryant and Vice-Chairman Wesley Momo Johnson neither of whom could contest in the scheduled October 2005 elections. As per the CPA, all of the NTLA, government ministry portfolios and corporations were divided amongst Taylor's NPP party (as former Government of Liberia or GOL), LURD, and MODEL, with civil society being given token representation. The most recent negotiated peace between warlords within the warring factions and the involvement and deployment of international peacekeepers finally gave hope to Liberians that war might finally be behind them.

Children and War in Liberia

The Liberian conflict that lasted from 1989 – 2003 had terrible consequences on the population, and on children specifically. As undeniable victims, almost all Liberian children suffered 'one or more traumatic war-related experiences' whether they were innocent bystanders or party to the conflict.³¹¹ Rampant human rights abuses, looting, the proliferation of arms and splintering of fighting factions were but some of the distinct characteristics of the civil war, almost all of which negatively affected children directly as victims or participants. Regardless of where the children were or their level of involvement in the conflict the collective damage on them was immeasurable.

Although there is a need to be cautious due to the source, motives and methods of collection, most accounts of the conduct of the various factions and parties to the conflict were documented by human rights organisations and NGOs. The body of literature claims that factions were indistinguishable in their conduct. Human rights abuses were pervasive resulting with all Liberian children being denied of their right to education, shelter, health and protection. Unfortunately the Liberian conflict left no shortages of examples to draw from. Below are examples of such abuses:

Education – During the war, like many of the other decrepit state services, the education system, including schools, ceased to function.³¹² Approximately 80 percent of the schools in Liberia were destroyed between 1989 and 1997, and many of the remaining schools were damaged in the fighting which ended in 2003.³¹³

³¹¹ Cohn, "Protection of Child Soldiers in Liberia," 180.

³¹² Human Rights Watch, *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1994), 4.

³¹³ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 3.

Displacement— Houses were regularly looted and villages were burnt down causing massive displacement throughout the country. At different stages of the conflict it was estimated that up to 80 percent of displaced population were women and children equalling literally hundreds of thousands of children.³¹⁴ At the height of the conflict in 1996, it was estimated that there were one million Liberians internally displaced and 755,000 refugees.³¹⁵ In 2003, when Monrovia was attacked by LURD forces hundreds of thousands of civilians were once again displaced from their homes as the city was under siege.

Health— As is often the case in war, malnutrition was exacerbated due to the conflict. Between June and July 2003, the French NGO *Action Contre la Faim* detected moderate, severe, or acute malnutrition in slightly more than half of the 6,500 screened displaced children in Monrovia.³¹⁶

Sexual Assault— Sexual assault was rampant throughout the conflict. Many children had been separated from their parents either because they were killed or through displacement, and as a result fell victim to sexual assault. Estimates of sexual assault claim that as many as 40 percent of all Liberian women were raped during 1989-1997.³¹⁷ And in 2003, 74 percent of all interviewed Liberian women and adolescents (age 15-49) living in refugee camps in Sierra Leone were victim of at least one incident of sexual violence before they fled Liberia.³¹⁸

Protection—The vast majority of the casualties of the war were civilians either directly through fighting or the consequences of conflict, and naturally children are among those casualties. Civilians were regularly attacked and fired upon by the fighting factions (including ECOMOG). The *modus operati* of the factions was to eliminate any implicit or explicit supporters of the opposition, whoever they might have been. To take a few examples, Taylor's initial attempt to seize Monrovia from Doe in 1990 resulted in between 13,000 and 20,000 deaths, mostly civilians.³¹⁹ In 1992 Operation Octopus resulted in over 6,500 casualties which were mostly civilians.³²⁰ 600 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed in a town called Harbel in an area disputed between NPFL and the AFL in June 1993.³²¹ In 1996, Taylor's last attempt to seize Monrovia cost the lives of two thousand people within a few days of fighting.³²²

The Liberian population suffered horrible abuses at the hands of adults as well as children. Although adults started the war, children were an integral part of all of the fighting factions (except ECOMOG), and the collective history of events and suffering endured does not always explicitly distinguish between adult or child perpetration. Many children have paid the ultimate price as both victims and perpetrators of killings,

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder*, Appendix 2.

³¹⁶ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 11.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 21.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 2.

³²⁰ Ibid., 99.

³²¹ Ibid., 100-101.

³²² Ibid., 108.

terrorizing civilians, rape and sexual assault, torture, forced labour, and joining or being recruited into fighting factions.

Children as Perpetrators of War

When putting the war in Liberia in to context one must keep in mind the situation in Liberia during the outbreak of war. The majority of the population had suffered from severe economic hardship and gross human rights abuses by the Doe regime, and at least initially many saw the NPFL insurgency as a vehicle of political change. As the NPFL insurgency gained ground in Lofa and Nimba County towards the beginning of the war, and as a result of general dissatisfaction there was a ready pool of civilians who were prepared to take up arms for this struggle.³²³ The NPFL had little problems recruiting fighters as much of the population was interested in revenging many of the injustices endured at the hands of the Doe regime. Compounded by demographics (Liberia being a very young country with a high percentage of its population under the age of 18 years old), social marginalization and exclusion, lack of social mobility or employment, and being surrounded by conflict, the first generation of Liberian child soldiers emerged within the NPFL known as the Small Boys Unit.³²⁴ The use of children as fighters quickly became a characterising feature of the Liberian civil war.

By historical standards, rates of child soldiers in Liberia's wars were very high.³²⁵ Child soldiers became party to the war shortly after Taylor's insurgency in 1989 and although Taylor's NPFL initiated and set a dangerous precedent of recruiting children as fighters, to varying degrees encouraging every subsequent emergent force to follow suit. As early as 1990, the international media published photos and reports of AK-47 toting child fighters, high on drugs and drunk on alcohol wearing t-shirts resembling clothes that could have easily been found in the inner city in any American city.³²⁶

Used by the factions as an alternative military source, whether as firepower or auxiliary support, children were used as soldiers to capture territory and maintain control over it.³²⁷ As is generally the case, in comparison to their adult counterparts, child soldiers are perceived as cheap labour, more malleable, more obedient to following orders, and less concerned with the differences between right and wrong. These are some of the reasons

³²³ Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay, and Funmi Olonisakin, 20-24.

³²⁴ Ellis, "Liberia's Warlord Insurgency ", 168.

³²⁵ Vera Achvarina and Simon F. Reich, "No Place to Hide," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 162.

³²⁶ Reno, "The Organisation of Warlord Politics in Liberia," 79.

³²⁷ Singer, 56.

that make children such powerful tools with which to perpetuate war, this was certainly the case in Liberia.

The use of child soldiers in Liberia has been well documented by academics, international organisations (such as the UN, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch) and media. The use of children within the factions' ranks was confirmed in battle when the NPFL attacked ECOMOG forces in 1992. Although ECOMOG troops initially hesitated to engage their attackers who they realised there were AK-47 wielding children, they reluctantly returned fire to protect themselves.³²⁸ Bullets shot by children are no less dangerous than those shot by adults. Further confirmation of the presence of child combatants came later when 21 percent of the demobilised soldiers in the 1996/7 process were children who were represented in every faction.³²⁹ By 2002, all three of the factions (GOL, LURD, and MODEL) recruited and employed children, some of whom later went through the DDR process. It was estimated that during 1989 and 1997 between 6,000 and 15,000 children fought in the war, and up to 21,000 children fought between 1999 and 2003.³³⁰ Simply put, all of the factions that fought in Liberia's civil war to varying degrees deliberately and continuously recruited and used child soldiers with the exception of ECOMOG and ECOMIL.

Methods of Child Recruitment

Although the NPFL mainly recruited along ethnic lines, with regard to children they initially recruited among more vulnerable populations, such as orphans or street children. The NPFL's Small Boys Unit was initially composed of many orphans from Doe's campaign against the Gio and Mano civilians in Nimba County.³³¹ However, this trend changed as the war continued. There was a contagion and domino effect—where once the threshold of using children as soldiers was crossed by the NPFL, all the subsequent factions engaged in similar activities to bolster their forces. As the factions splintered and emerged, they recruited anyone who was able and/or willing to fight in order to bolster their strength and capacity. The push and pull factors were abound. Some children joined the forces because they thought it was the only option available to them, while others choose to fight because of what that would provide them with.

³²⁸ Cain: 280.

³²⁹ Cohn, "Protection of Child Soldiers in Liberia," 195.

³³⁰ Amnesty International; Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 26-27.

³³¹ Cain: 279.

During the conflict, recruitment was made easier for all factions due to the failure of previous DDR attempts and the institutionalization of children within the security forces by the GOL under Taylor. In many instances, children who fought in the civil war between 1989 and 1997 were re-recruited in 2002 and 2003, many as adults, and have spent much of their young lives associated with fighting forces.³³² It was reported that at times children and their families were offered or promised a payment of \$100 for their recruitment and participation in the factions.³³³

Although many of the recruits (if not most of them) were seen to have joined the fight *voluntarily*, whether it was to seek revenge or as a means of survival, some children were forcibly recruited. It was not uncommon for factions to abduct children from their schools, villages, and families threatening them at gun-point. Although the brutality of the forceful abductions was not on the same scale of those in Sierra Leone or Northern Uganda, there is documentation of children being gang pressed and being forced to kill relatives and people from their village to sever ties with their communities.³³⁴ In the first years of fighting, 'only a small percentage of children report having been forced by a warring faction to join [the factions].'³³⁵ In the fighting that ensued between 2000-2003, all three factions (GOL, LURD, MODEL) targeted displaced populations (refugee camps, IDP camps) for recruitment, including child recruitment.

The level of a child's voluntarism or choice associated with fighting is an extremely complex as well as contentious issue. There is a continuum ranging from fully *free* recruitment on the one end to forced recruitment on the other end of the spectrum, within which only the extreme ends are fully mutually exclusive.³³⁶ That being said, few children in Liberia exclusively fall at the extreme ends of the continuum, and if they did, they seldom stay there as the reasons for fighting are fluid and are often changing.

The nature of the war meant that being associated with a fighting faction, through either your affiliation or the possession of a gun you could access food, clothing, security (possibly a false sense of security), women and/or loot. Some academics argued that the war was as a vehicle for social transformation.³³⁷ It has been argued that the war gave the

³³² Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 5.

³³³ Ibid., 27.

³³⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia*.

³³⁵ Ibid. Section 5

³³⁶ Happold, 12.

³³⁷ Utas. Morten Bøås, "Africa's Young Guerrillas: Rebel with a Cause?," *Current History* (2004).

opportunity and motivation for young people to access things that previously were not accessible to them as a result of their marginalization from the social, economic and political spheres. Furthermore, the fighting was the only means available for them to improve their plight albeit temporarily.

Profile of a Liberian Child Soldier

During the 1996/7 DDR process, information was gathered by UNICEF from the 4,306 children or 21 percent of the total 21,315 fighters that went through the process.³³⁸ That information provided a better understanding of who the children were in the earlier stages of the war, the role they served within the factions, their experiences and their post-conflict ambitions.

UNICEF found that Liberian child soldier typically joined the fighting factions between the ages of eight and twelve years old.³³⁹ After spending between three and five years fighting the child would disarm between the ages of 15 and 17. Fifty-eight percent of the disarmed child soldiers said they spent more than four years fighting, and sixty-nine percent were between the ages of 15-17 when they disarmed. If the information is consistent, this means that a large portion of soldiers between the ages 18 and 22 would have joined when they were children. None of the subsequent DDR programming was not designed to mitigate or account for this dynamic.

One common feature was that all of the children had limited education. Some 1,200 child soldiers reported to have no education whatsoever. Eighty-two percent of the child fighters were attending school prior to joining the factions, of those, 82 percent were in primary school, only 16 percent were in junior high school and 2 percent were in high school. This lack of education certainly is not the cause of their participation; however it may be a factor of their involvement. After the war, 77 percent of those disarmed wanted to return to school, while 10 percent wanted to learn a vocation and another 10 percent wanted to get involved with petty trading.

Contrary to what people have written about Liberian child soldiers, only less than one percent of the children said they were orphaned by the war. Sixty-one percent said they knew both parents to be alive, while the remaining 37 percent knew of one parent to be

³³⁸ Kelly David, *The Disarmament, Demobilisation & Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Liberia, 1994-1997: The Process and Lessons Learned* (UNICEF- Liberia & US National Committee for UNICEF, 1998).

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

alive. However, once integrated in to the factions many of the fighters were separated from their parents.

Two unrelated factors influenced the military rank of children: level of education and ruthlessness. The higher the education level, the faster the children would be promoted. And the more vigilant or ruthless they were, the more recognition they would receive by their commanders. Although often self-proclaimed, children demobilised as lieutenants, captains, colonels and generals. And it was not uncommon for higher-ranking children to lead other groups of children.

The figures capturing the disarmed and demobilised fighters illustrated the differences between the factions (see chart). Children constituted 18 percent of Taylor's NPFL demobilised force, ULIMO-K, Lofa Defence Force, ULIMO-J and LPC demobilised children at 21, 32, 36 and 37 percent respectively.³⁴⁰ AFL forces demobilised the fewest percentage of children within their forces, at two percent. However, it is important to keep in mind that the figures only reflect those children that were demobilised from the forces, and it was estimated that many children did not go through the formal DDR process and are therefore not reflected in the above-mentioned figures.

Breakdown of Children Disarmed per Faction

Faction	Percentage of total
NPFL	18% *
ULIMO-K	21%
ULIMO-J	36%
Lofa Defence Force	32%
AFL	2%

*This figure is arguable low because he did not demobilise many of his loyal soldiers, and many of them including children were then institutionalised into the state security instruments.

Source: Cohn, Ilene. "The Protection of Child Soldiers During the Liberian Peace Process." *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 6 (1998): 195-96

The Treatment of Child Soldiers

Civilians, including children, were armed and deployed throughout the country with little or no military experience as the violence spread. It was not too long before the young inexperienced fighters quickly became acquainted with military command and technique

³⁴⁰ Cohn, "Protection of Child Soldiers in Liberia," 195-6.

‘attributing to themselves military ranks and grandiose war names, the latter often inspired by the Hollywood action videos which became so popular during the war-years.’³⁴¹ Authors such as Richards write about the important role such films have on shaping modern consciousness and activities in war in the West African context.³⁴² And specifically in Liberia soldiers’ indoctrination into violence was reinforced by repetitive viewings of films such as Rambo, Platoon, Full Metal Jacket, Deer Hunter, Kung Fu.³⁴³

Even though the collective experience of child soldiers varied greatly, the roles the children fulfilled within the factions were similar to the role of their adult counterparts. Although some children were used as auxiliary support and forced labour, such as the running of errands, carry ammunition or food, cooking and setting up camps, their roles went well beyond support. Children served as bodyguards, acted as spies, informants and carried out reconnaissance for their forces. They carried out ambushes, and often manned checkpoints which posed as violent flashpoints to the general population. Under-age fighters, like their adult counter-parts, served as executioners and often fought on the front lines.³⁴⁴ Moreover, as children were often seen as dispensable they were sent out to fight in dangerously forward positions, and were sometimes used as cannon fodder during battle.

Soldiers, including children, were generally not paid and relied on stealing loot and plunder in order to survive. Exception to this was government forces and militia who received occasion payment up until 2003 under Taylor.³⁴⁵ In some cases, to provide an incentive for combat children government militias would be paid when they fought on the front lines.³⁴⁶ However, in most other cases guns were their means to procuring food, clothes, women, and equally important a sense of security.

As the war became protracted it gained a momentum and logic of its own. It became clear that a key motivating factor on several levels (from the individual soldier right up to the faction commanders) was opportunity, be it loot, plunder, and/or social re-engineering. This reliance on plunder encouraged the abuses suffered by their main targets, civilians. There were no supply systems, the factions didn’t need them because

³⁴¹ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 111.

³⁴² Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest* 105-114.

³⁴³ David, 16.

³⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia*, 12-3.

³⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill: Child Soldiers in Liberia," 25.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

they took what they needed or wanted from the people in the areas they were in.³⁴⁷ Apart from the distribution of arms and ammunition, this remained true for the duration of the war. It was even reported that soldiers of competing factions would trade looted goods with one another.³⁴⁸ This was yet another example or illustration of how opportunism was pervasive amongst soldiers.

The consumption of alcohol and drugs were commonplace among all fighters, including children. Commanders encouraged their fighters to drink alcohol in the form of palm wine, cane-spirit, or beer, smoke marijuana and take amphetamines, locally known as 'bubble' or 'brown-brown' which was a mixture of cocaine and gunpowder.³⁴⁹ Like multiple viewings of Hollywood action films, the alcohol and drugs served a few purposes— to instil courage, ferocity, and a sense of invincibility into the fighters, as well as to further blur the distinction between right and wrong. Alcohol and drugs also helped keep the fighters dependent on their commanders who controlled the supply and would often distribute the alcohol/drugs out before battle. Throughout the duration of the war many of the fighters became dependant to alcohol and drugs.³⁵⁰

Outfits and Weapons used by Child Soldiers

One of the ways in which the Liberian conflict differed from what we know as 'traditional warfare' is that the various factions were indistinguishable not only from one another but also from the general population. Few military uniforms were distributed, and the fighters either wore their own clothes or in some cases were given T-shirts identifying their faction.³⁵¹ As the factions were mostly composed of civilians all the factions looked like the general population and more or less the same (as well as indistinguishable from one another). It was not uncommon for child soldiers to be sent into villages and enemy controlled areas posing as civilians for the purpose of gaining information or conducting stealth attacks.

The UN Arms Embargo imposed in 2003, did not seriously restrict the flow of arms or their use in Liberia. As mentioned earlier, although the arms embargo slightly reduced the arms supply to Taylor's forces, it did not have the overall desired effect. Liberia's

³⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia*, 13.

³⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill: Child Soldiers in Liberia," 25.

³⁴⁹ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy* 120.

³⁵⁰ Yet there was little alcohol and drug abuse assistance or programmes in the post-conflict peacebuilding stage.

³⁵¹ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 29.

borders remained porous throughout the conflict which allowed arms to be smuggled both in and out of the country. A UN Panel of Experts tasked with monitoring the timber, arms, and diamond sanctions documented some major arms transfers to Taylor's forces (GOL) between 2000 and 2003.³⁵² And it was well documented that LURD was being supplied weaponry by the Guinean government and MODEL being supplied weaponry by the Ivorian government.

Like in most contemporary civil wars, small arms and light weapons were the weapons most heavily used. More specifically, submachine guns, AK-47s, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), and mortar rounds (60 or 81mm mortars) were used.³⁵³ These weapons allowed children to be involved in front-line fighting because they were simple to use and light weight. These were the weapons children predominately fought with. Evidence of children using of these arms was captured in the international media as from the early stages of the conflict, and evidence of the use of such armaments is evident in structures (such as buildings, light-posts, bridges, etc.) throughout Liberia in 2007. During the war, children were given different weapons than their adult counterparts, either based on ability to operate and carry the weapon (heavier weapons were reserved for adults) or military stature (i.e., handguns were reserved for senior members).³⁵⁴

Research conducted on one hundred Liberian child soldiers in 2003 (covering all the major factions) showed some insightful information.³⁵⁵ Obviously it is not the whole picture, but may be indicative of the trends:

- 94 percent claimed to have access to firearms (either AK-47s or submachine guns).
- Among the ones who did not have access to firearms were younger respondents, suggesting that arms were reserved for more mature and stronger fighters.
- Factions with limited ammunition supply would ration the munitions according to ability of soldiers, because it was perceived that children were more wasteful and less effective with their weapons than their adult counterparts.

³⁵² United Nations, "United Nations Security Council Report of the Panel of Experts Concerning Liberia Sanctions " (New York: United Nations, 23 April 2003).

³⁵³ For more information about the origin of the guns and ammunitions see Human Rights Watch, *Weapons Sanctions, Military Supplies, and Human Suffering: Illegal Arms Flows to Liberia and the June-July 2003 Shelling of Monrovia* (3 November 2003).; Global Witness, *The Usual Suspects: Liberia's Weapons and Mercenaries in Cote D'Ivoire and Sierra Leone* (London: Global Witness, March 2003).; The Graduate Institute of International Studies, *Small Arms Survey 2005 : Weapons at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 167-9.

³⁵⁴ Wille, 198.

³⁵⁵ Wille, 197-208.

- Although contrary to other credible reports this research reported that it was rare for children in Liberia to use heavier arms such as RPGs or mortars.³⁵⁶
- It was also suggested that the widespread availability of arms and ammunition was a contributing factor in the recruitment of children.
- Weapons were not necessarily provided to all child soldiers on a permanent basis, but either on a shift or mission specific basis.
- As per an observed pattern of combat, initial RPG shelling followed by small arms fire, it can be extrapolated that due to the differences in weapons between adults (with the heavier weaponry) and child soldiers (with the light weapons), adults held more strategic positions and were responsible for initiating combat while their younger counterparts held front-line positions.
- Child soldiers participated in both highly structured units (such as the Small Boys Unit of the NPFL), as well as unstructured or unorganised units.
- There were varying degrees of drug and alcohol abuse depending on personalities and discipline levels of the factions children were associated with.

This survey confirmed what was already known in the child protection community about the roles, responsibilities and participation of children in the conflict.

Girl Soldiers

Although less is known about the involvement of girls in the early years of the conflict, their usage increased in the later years of fighting. Girls constituted a portion of child soldiers throughout the duration of the war, although at smaller proportions than boys. Girls, like boys, had a diverse range of roles within their factions. Girls mostly served as “wartime women” or as the fighters’ wives. They were often responsible for auxiliary roles such as cooking, cleaning, and carrying heavy loads. However like their boy counter-parts, they also served as spies, and fought on front lines. Older girls generally organised themselves into effective fighting units, while the younger girls served as auxiliary support. Many of the former girl soldiers reported to have been used as forced labour in addition to being raped and forcibly recruited into their factions. During their affiliation with the factions the girls continued to be sexually exploited.³⁵⁷ Many of the girl soldiers would become pregnant and have their babies in the midst of fighting, while

³⁵⁶ Reports that claim that children did in fact use heavier armaments include Human Rights Watch, *Weapons Sanctions, Military Supplies, and Human Suffering: Illegal Arms Flows to Liberia and the June-July 2003 Shelling of Monrovia*, 9-10.

³⁵⁷ David, 20-1.

expected to remain with the factions and continue to serve their other functions. In 2004, 75 percent of girls that were demobilised reported suffering some form of sexual abuse or exploitation during their tenure within the factions.³⁵⁸

Conclusion

Since its independence in 1847, Liberia has suffered a turbulent history characterised by subjugation, exclusionary political and economic systems, abusive leaders and pervasive insecurity for the majority of the population. Since 1980, the only way political power changed was through military means. Liberia's civil war (1989-2003) was fought to gain political and economic control of the country, in a bid to pry power away from President Doe, who himself gained power through a *coup d'état* a decade earlier. During the war, the Liberian population suffered at the hands of the state and those attempting to gain control of it. There was mass displacement, human rights violations and over 250,000 people killed. Although the war was a civil war, the personalities and friendships of regional leaders significantly impacted the course of events, both in the perpetration of the war as well as its resolution, thus the war had a regional dimension. ECOWAS was the first to intervene in Liberia, in April 1990 and again in June 2003, by sending peacekeeping troops in an attempt to bring the war to an end. In 2003, this ECOWAS peacekeeping force was transferred to the United Nations, who were mandated to implement and monitor the Accra Peace Agreement that brought an end to the war.

Charles Taylor, the leader of the initial insurgency against President Doe and one of the main antagonists of the war, aggressively recruited boys and girls from the start of his campaign. This set a precedent resulting in the use of child soldiers being a feature throughout the war. Every warring faction in Liberia followed the suit and also recruited child soldiers. Regardless of the method of their recruitment, or their motives or those of the factions that used them, children are partially responsible for the countless loss of life and havoc wreaked in Liberia. The participation of child soldiers contributed to the brutality and level of atrocities of the war.

³⁵⁸ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 29.

Chapter 4 – Peacebuilding, DDR and Children

Peacebuilding is a concept and strategy that is ambiguous, ambitious, continuously evolving and elastic. There is no universally recognised or concrete definition to peacebuilding as it has come to mean different things to different people and organisations. Generally, peacebuilding is used to describe a plethora of external interventions aimed at reducing the risk that war will either erupt or return to a country.³⁵⁹ Other synonymous terms used to describe peacebuilding activities include—post-conflict reconstruction, post-conflict recovery, post-conflict stabilization, nation building (in some contexts), transitional issues, and conflict reduction. Peacebuilding and its synonymous terms emerged at the end of the Cold War as a response to the unsettling realities of international affairs and as a consequence of the increased demand on the UN.

The end of the Cold War fundamentally changed the *status quo* of international affairs. Starting from its inception in 1945 through 1989, the UN's mandate to maintain peace and security was severely diminished by the insurmountable, sacred and inflexible concept of national sovereignty. The UN was rendered virtually ineffective to keep the peace as the wars were strategically fought, often by proxy, between the two super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and their respective allies. Due to the design of the UN Security Council and the veto-power of its permanent members, wars were fought unabated throughout the developing world with little international redress or intervention. However, this changed dramatically once the iron curtain collapsed and the Cold War ended in 1989, leaving the UN in great demand.

It was generally acknowledged by policymakers and scholars that of wars post-1989 had

³⁵⁹ Michael Barnett and others, "Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name," *Global Governance* 13, no. (2007): 37.

shifted from international conflict to civil or internal armed conflicts. No longer severely constrained by Cold War realities, civil wars were testing the UN and its Security Council whose responsibility it was to maintain international peace and security. New concerns and threats—such as human rights abuses, issues relating to the protection of civilians in war and small arms were being brought to the Security Council. In the face of globalisation, and as a result of UNSC's decisions, the idea of sovereignty appeared more flexible than ever before enabling international interventions to take place.³⁶⁰ The very definition of what constituted a threat to international peace and security shifted. Non-military issues were now seen by the Security Council as potential threats to international peace and security.

In January 1992 the Heads of State and Government on the UNSC met to discuss the responsibility of the Security Council and its mandate in the maintenance of international peace and security. As a result of this meeting, the Security Council for the first time explicitly broadened the notion of international peace and security to include non-military threats. The President of the Security Council noted:

‘The absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security. The United Nations membership as a whole, working through the appropriate bodies, needs to give the highest priority to the solution of these matters.’³⁶¹

This acknowledgement and statement by the UNSC now meant that economic, social, humanitarian and ecological factors both external and internal to states fell within the aegis of the Security Council and were considered threats to international peace and security, albeit selectively. The concept of security shifted from military or ‘hard’ security to a more comprehensive or ‘soft’ security. Security’s referent was no longer exclusively the state, but now included societies, the environment and human rights. This redefinition of security marked a shift in international affairs, and laid the seed for a new security agenda, what became known as human security.³⁶² In their statement, the UNSC invited the Secretary-General to circulate to UN member-states ‘his analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient with the

³⁶⁰ Necla Tschirgi, *Peacebuilding as the Link between Security and Development: Is the Window of Opportunity Closing?* (New York: International Peace Academy, December 2003), 1-4. David Malone, "Introduction," in *The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, ed. David Malone (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004), 1.

³⁶¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Peacebuilding Overview*, 1.

³⁶² This broadening of security is discussed by authors such as Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security," *International Security* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1983)., Keith Krause and Michael Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods," *Mershon International Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (October 1996).

framework and provisions of the Charter the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping.³⁶³ These shifts and increased demand on the UN resulted in the need to re-think the UN's conceptualisation, involvement and methodology of peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions.

Responding to the UNSC's invitation, the term *post-conflict peacebuilding* was born and entered the international policy lexicon after the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali published *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992.³⁶⁴ However, by no means were the various components that make up peacebuilding a new concept. Modern post-war reconstruction has antecedents in reconstruction efforts after World War II in Western Europe and Japan.³⁶⁵ Building on previous peacebuilding thinking,³⁶⁶ what was novel about Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* was not the originality of peacebuilding but that he was specifically articulating peacebuilding with regard to the UN's role in maintaining international peace and security.³⁶⁷

Post-conflict peacebuilding as defined by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and thus the UN was seen as the process of identifying and supporting structures, which tend to strengthen peace in order to avoid the recurrence of conflict and foster a sustainable environment so that economic and social development can prosper.³⁶⁸ Peacebuilding was seen as integral to the UN's work and supplemental as well as inherently linked to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. As envisioned by Boutros-Ghali peacebuilding included processes such as negotiating peace settlements, security sector reform, disarmament, repatriating displaced persons, restoring law and order, election monitoring, enhancing human rights, and governance reform.³⁶⁹ These collective processes were seen as essential steps aimed at transforming a conflict country towards stability.

The conceptualization and implementation of peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions have emerged due to the failure of preventative diplomacy, peacemaking

³⁶³ Boutros-Ghali, Para 1.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Alberto Cutillo, *International Assistance to Countries Emerging from Conflict: A Review of Fifteen Years of Interventions and the Future of Peacebuilding* (New York: International Peace Academy, February 2006).

³⁶⁶ Such as Johan Galtung, "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding " in *Peace, War and Defense* (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1975). Keating and Knight, eds., XXXIV.

³⁶⁷ Cutillo, 1.

³⁶⁸ Paris, 3. or Boutros-Ghali, para 21, 55-57.

³⁶⁹ Boutros-Ghali, para 21, 55-57.

initiatives and traditional military interventions to achieve peace on their own.³⁷⁰ Although peacebuilding is supplementary to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping it differs from these processes in a number of ways. Preventive diplomacy is aimed at preventing the escalation, limiting the spread, and resolving disputes between parties prior to the breakout of physical violence.³⁷¹ Peacemaking refers to bringing hostile parties together through peaceful and diplomatic means to negotiate an official settlement or end to conflict.³⁷² Peacekeeping is the deployment of a third-party intervention to the field (in this context, UN peacekeepers—military, civilian police, and/or civilians) in order to reduce or maintain the absence of violence.³⁷³ These three processes are to be used at different stages of conflict—preventative diplomacy is used before the breakout of violence, during conflicts peacemaking is used and lastly, in order to monitor and implement the negotiated peace, peacekeeping is used.³⁷⁴ Peacebuilding, on the other hand, is aimed at addressing the root cause of the conflict, and preventing the recurrence of violence.³⁷⁵ Peacebuilding not only guards against the absence of violence, like peacekeeping, but also aspires to build a positive peace—that is the absence of structural and cultural violence resulting in the presence of justice, reconciliation and equity or in other words increased human security (freedom from want and/or freedom from fear).³⁷⁶

As the concept of peacebuilding was being developed, the concept and implementation of peacekeeping was also being re-examined and enhanced to better respond to the post-Cold War world. Traditional peacekeeping (i.e., military intervention) was no longer seen as adequate in dealing with the reality and plethora of problems created by conflict (and indeed creating conflict), peacebuilding was envisioned as an integral and complementary component of peacekeeping's re-development.

Since Boutros-Ghali's initial introduction of post-conflict peacebuilding, the concept of peacebuilding has been further developed, broadened and repositioned. Like democracy, peacebuilding is now seen to be relevant to the prevention of armed conflict (i.e., before violence starts), not merely as response to the consequences of war. Peacebuilding is now

³⁷⁰ M. I. Gawerc, "Peacebuilding: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives," *Peace and Change* 31, no. 4 (October 2006): 440.

³⁷¹ Boutros-Ghali, para 20.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid., para 20-1.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., para 21.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., para 37.

³⁷⁶ Gawerc: 439.

understood to cover ‘a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of lasting and sustainable peace.’³⁷⁷ Outside the context of conflict, peacebuilding and development activities are much the same.³⁷⁸ Post-conflict peacebuilding creates unique challenges requiring different responses.³⁷⁹ For instance, in the wake of armed conflict in order to return a country (or society) to normalcy or a state where active conflict is no longer present while addressing the causes of the conflict, it is necessary to not only create a secure environment, but also to deal with the large number of weapons and combatants in society, repair deficient national structures—whether they are infrastructure or governmental deficits, as well as the need for social and economic reconstruction.³⁸⁰

During its evolution, peacebuilding has reformed policy and clarified how programmes should be implemented within the UN system and beyond. Firstly, peacebuilding has spawned many normative and policy developments. Starting with *An Agenda for Peace* and the subsequent UN documents and resolutions (such as Brahimi Report, Prevention of Armed Conflict (2001)) the need for effective peacebuilding has been outlined and addressed. Moreover, the broadening the definition and referent of security has helped push an agenda of human security. This has allowed the UNSC to pass thematic resolutions dealing with issues such as children and armed conflict, human rights, and small arms.³⁸¹ Outside the UN, organisations such as the OECD and governments such as United States, United Kingdom and Norway have contributed to peacebuilding issues by increasing their understanding, and addressing peacebuilding issues in their security and development policies.

Peacebuilding has also inspired operational responses. The UN has transformed its ability to deploy multifunctional peacekeeping operations, and has changed its *modus operatus* in the field by going beyond traditional military peacekeeping. Beyond its peacebuilding initiatives, the UN has had to get creative in dealing with the complex problems brought to it, and has intervened in conflict situations by governing transitional

³⁷⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Peacebuilding Overview*, 2.

³⁷⁸ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Peacebuilding- a Development Perspective* (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2004), 15.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ It is important to note that what is ‘normal’ is problematic highly contested in the literature.

³⁸¹ Tschirgi, 3.

administrations in Kosovo (1999), East Timor (1999) and Afghanistan (2002).³⁸² Operationally, governments and other organisations such as NATO, OSCE, and ECOWAS, have complemented the UN's work by actively engaging in resolving armed conflicts around the globe.

The importance of peacebuilding to the work of the UN in its role in the maintenance and resolution of armed conflict has been confirmed by not only Boutros-Ghali's successor, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, but also by the UN Security Council, many advisors and various expert panels—such as the Panel on UN Peace Operations, and the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change.³⁸³ However, despite all the high-level political support, the implementation of peacebuilding has had mixed results and gaps in the UN's peacebuilding infrastructure remained until 2005. There was a 'gaping hole in the UN institutional machinery: no part of the UN system effectively addresses the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace.'³⁸⁴ Moreover, the problem was not only structural, but also operational. Peacebuilding initiatives undertaken by the UN had mixed results. In 2005, Secretary-General Kofi Annan recommended the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office, and Peacebuilding Fund to address the gap in the UN's institutional framework regarding peacebuilding activities.³⁸⁵ The establishment of these peacebuilding entities aimed to further the UN's peacebuilding agenda by coordinating, overseeing, and support peacebuilding when and where relevant. The peacebuilding Commission is now part of the permanent UN infrastructure, reflecting the evolution and demands on the organisation.

Many international organisations and several governments have either created new institutions or reformed some of their institutions to cope with and address the new challenges that fall under the rubric of peacebuilding. In order to address conflict and its various impacts the UN has created the new institutions such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); and new departments such as the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

³⁸² Ibid., 4-5.

³⁸³ Kofi Annan, "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All," (New York: 2005); High-Level Panel on Threats; United Nations, "Resolution 1645 (2005)," (New York: United Nations, 20 December 2005); United Nations, "Statement by the President of the Security Council." United Nations, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations."

³⁸⁴ Annan, 31.

³⁸⁵ Ibid; High-Level Panel on Threats.

(DPKO). Institutions, such as the International Criminal Court and the Peacebuilding Commission are new additions to deal with the peacebuilding issues. Attesting to the importance of peacebuilding beyond the UN, governments have created new departments dealing with peacebuilding issues such as the Office of Transition Initiatives at USAID or the United Kingdom's Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Department at DFID, or equivalents at organisations such as the World Bank's Post-Conflict Unit.³⁸⁶

Peacebuilding in Action

The end of armed conflict does not mark the end of suffering, divisions, and rivalries. Most post-conflict countries suffer from ethnic, political, economic, social and possibly religious rifts well past the conclusion of armed conflict.³⁸⁷ Large parts of the population is often physically, mentally (emotionally), socially and economically traumatised by the war. These experiences require a robust response. Peacebuilding is about creating a sustainable and positive peace. Thus, peacebuilding goes beyond peacekeeping and the monitoring of a cease-fire. Peacebuilding activities are directly aimed at reducing not only the means available, but also the incentives for actors to return to conflict.³⁸⁸ Peacebuilding is about re-establishing the social contract between the state and its citizens, such as security, welfare and representation.³⁸⁹ Peacebuilding, and more specifically post-conflict peacebuilding, is much more than a checklist of activities, aims to address security, governance, social, economic and developmental deficits through building capacity, addressing root-causes of war and supporting government initiatives. Addressing these deficits or pillars is often mutually reinforcing and necessary for achieving lasting peace and security.³⁹⁰ Addressing these complex dimensions require complementary and often-competing priorities, with both in the short-term and long-term.³⁹¹

³⁸⁶ Tschirgi, 5.

³⁸⁷ John Prendergast and Emily Plumb, "Building Local Capacity: From Implementation to Peacebuilding," in *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, ed. Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 327.

³⁸⁸ Barnett and others: 49.

³⁸⁹ Krause and Jütersonke, "Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments," 450.

³⁹⁰ This framework is taken from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Peacebuilding Overview*, 2.. That being said, other outline slightly different dimensions, but generally include all the same components.

³⁹¹ Ho-Won Jeong, *Peacebuilding in Postconflict Societies : Strategy and Process* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005), 13.

Security Dimension

Security and the cessation of violent conflict are paramount for a country to accomplish a transition from conflict to peace. Security is crucial for short and long-term goals to be met, such as the formation of a new government, the strengthening of political entities, economic and social development. Whether on a state or individual level, insecurity undermines the legitimacy of state institutions and hinders the prospect of reconciliation. In post-conflict environments, political, economic and social insecurity is generally heightened as a result of conflict and its legacy. This insecurity must be dealt with in order for not only relief efforts to gain root in the short-term, but also for long-term development regardless of whether that insecurity was a cause for conflict or as a result of it. Unfortunately, security does not return to a previously warring nation or within communities by virtue of a negotiated peace.³⁹²

Armed conflict stresses countries in a myriad of ways. The proliferation of fighters and weapons are common problem in the wake of war. These combatants are potential spoilers of the peace, and are often inadequately prepared for life as a civilian. Where relevant, land mines must be removed from land so that it can once again be productively used. As there is typically a breakdown of the rule of law during armed conflicts there is a need to restore order to prevent outbreaks of criminal activity in the aftermath of conflicts. The security apparatus is often in need of being reformed in order it to re-establish its authority, get it in line with norms and standards to be able to provide security for both the state and its citizens. Police and security forces, which in many conflicts are themselves the worse perpetrators of human rights abuses must be vetted, re-trained and confidence in them must be restored. In post-conflict environments the protection of human rights becomes paramount, whether the abuse is at the hands of fighters, government entities, or criminal banditry.

There is an urgency to address the immediate security challenges, however peacebuilding activities must not only provide public and state security in a fragile environment, but must also build up domestic capacity to provide security in the medium and long-term.³⁹³ This is done through processes including security sector reform; disarmament,

³⁹² These issues are covered in detail in Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), *The Development Assistance Committee Guidelines- Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (Paris: OECD, 2001). Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi, eds., *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Geneva: Lit Verlag Münster, 2005).

³⁹³ Bryden and Hänggi, eds., *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, 13.

demobilisation, and reintegration; mine clearance; small arms and light weapons control; and the consolidation of the rule of law.

Governance and Political Dimension

The governance and political dimension of peacebuilding are aimed at addressing root causes of armed conflict, and assisting in creating a conducive and reconciliatory political environment. Too often, political grievances including lack of good governance, weak or illegitimate government institutions, pervasive corruption, political exclusion or a sense of widespread injustice spark and motivate actors to perpetrate war. Whether these grievances are real or perceived, they are often manipulated for political purposes. If political change is not possible through peaceful or democratic means, some elements may try to achieve their political ends through war. This pillar of peacebuilding is meant to reform systems and structures to reflect good governance while addressing some of the structural deficits that either resulted in war, or were damaged by the war. Enabling a political environment founded on good governance, which includes democracy, sound economic management, respect for human rights and the rule of law are essential in this task.³⁹⁴

War causes resources that would have, or may have gone, towards state services (such as education or health) to be diverted to pay for the war effort. War often drives technocrats and those capable of running government ministries to be displaced for safety reasons. Prolonged war often causes key functions of the state to cease to exist. In this respect, it is again the citizens of the country that suffer the most from the brunt of war. In order to build a sustainable peace it is necessary to strengthen political processes, structures, and confidence in order to restore the authority and functions of the government in post-conflict countries.

To this end, the UN and regional organisations (such as the AU) provide both support and technical expertise in order to create accountable, transparent and participatory political systems. The UN often, at least in Africa, is the vehicle for such support, whether through peacekeeping or peacebuilding missions. Peacebuilding, either through the UN or NGOs (or a combination of the two) either replace the state or partner up with them in the short to medium term in order to build their capacity in providing basic

³⁹⁴ Charles Call and Susan E. Cook, "Introduction: Postconflict Peacebuilding and Democratization," *Global Governance* 9, no. (2003): 35. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21-24.

services or reforming structures such as educational and health infrastructure, public administration, and rule of law systems.³⁹⁵ Much of the financial resources used to help post-conflict governments metaphorically get back on their feet is provided through traditional donors (such as the EU, US, Japan, etc.). This was certainly the case in Liberia with UNMIL.

Democratization is part of the peacebuilding paradigm. Normally there is a big push from the lead international/regional mediator or international organisation during the peace negotiation phase to push towards holding multi-party elections and for this inclusion to be part of a peace agreement. Depending on the nature of the conclusion of the conflict and the terms of the negotiated peace, a power-sharing transitional government may be established. This power-sharing government generally controls the functions of the state for a designated amount of time until national elections can be held and the administration can be transferred to elected officials. During the transitional process, the transitional government has time and support to try to restore the government's core functions and authority. However although this is not always possible given the composition and short-term goals of members of the transitional government. With varying degrees of success, as is often the case, the former warring factions transform themselves into either new political entities or merge with former structures or parties in order to contest in the elections.

Dealing with past events, grievances, and injustices are unavoidable when trying to rebuild a nation through a peacebuilding process.³⁹⁶ Depending again on the nature of the armed conflict and the terms of the ceasefire agreement, the creation of new government institutions may be established, either temporarily or permanently, to address the root causes of the war. Institutions are geared towards reconciling people's trust between different groups, but also their relationships with government institutions and policymakers. Although social healing happens on many various levels and through different means the creation of institutions such as anti-corruption commissions, governance reform commissions, transitional justice institutions (for instance, truth-seeking processes— such as and reconciliation commissions or punitive instruments— such as war crimes tribunals) may serve those ends.

³⁹⁵ Barnett and others: 49.

³⁹⁶ Keating and Knight, eds., XLVII.

Another vital part of the governance and political dimension of peacebuilding is to support and encourage a strong civil society and media. Civil society can serve many purposes in the post-conflict situation ranging from providing linkages between communities, contributing towards reconciliation through facilitating public engagement, dialogue and advocacy, mobilizing resources and expertise (or capacity). Moreover, civil society can provide services to complement government or international community efforts (such as training programmes or provide health services) as well as provide check and balances on government's and the international community's policies and actions (whether the UN, IFIs or donors).³⁹⁷ Civil society can contribute to political, economic and social reconstruction through various activities. In post-conflict environments civil society is often composed of both international NGOs as well as local NGOs, which often functions on multiple levels from local initiatives on a grassroots level to national initiatives, assisting government develop policies or implement peacebuilding efforts. Supporting the media is also important for many of the same reasons. The media plays an important role in democracy by providing the public with information. Moreover the media is capable of providing important checks and balances on the activities and policies of the government and various political actors. Depending on the quality, media can, in turn, increase accountability and allow the public to make better-informed decisions. Civil society and the media can be important actors in providing an alternative arena for post-conflict reform and can contribute to keeping the peacebuilding process on track including keeping the public engaged.

The governance and political dimension of peacebuilding includes: supporting governance reform, support for political and administrative authorities and structures; strengthening democratic processes; addressing transitional justice issues such as judicial reform, instruments for reconciliation and the consolidation of the rule of law; and strengthening civil society and media.

Social, Economic and Environmental Dimension

This dimension of the peacebuilding paradigm seeks to addresses the various social, economic and environmental causes as well as consequences of conflict. War has devastating effects on populations and destroys vital infrastructures (economic, education, health, transportation and communication). War often exacerbates poverty and reverses developmental gains. Populations get displaced either internally or

³⁹⁷ Prendergast and Plumb, 327-329.

internationally and as a consequence of war are often traumatised. Moreover, war can exacerbate competition for, access to, and/or mismanagement of natural resources, whether basic resources such as water or arable land or commodities such as cocoa, diamonds and oil. In the aftermath of war there are often many fundamental social, economic and environmental needs that must be addressed in the short, medium and long-term in order to successfully transition from war to peace. Many of social, economic, and environmental elements that are implemented rely on the other peacebuilding dimensions such as security and good governance. As time passes and the country transitions away from the emergency phase, there must be a shift away from short and medium-term initiatives such as relief efforts and repatriation towards more meaningful development enabling the population to live harmoniously.

The displacement of people creates complex challenges in post-conflict situations in terms of logistics, basic services, and repatriation or re-settlement. In the short to medium-term, the displaced populations need to be provided for. The displaced populations composed of IDPs and refugees need protection, shelter, basic health provisions, food, water, and education provisions for the children. Although the provisions for displaced persons generally pre-date the ceasefire agreements, they continue well into the future until either the displaced population get repatriated, voluntarily return, re-settle elsewhere or funding becomes unavailable. The willingness of IDPs and refugees to return to their communities or elsewhere in their countries greatly depends on not only the implementation of the peace agreement and the security situation, but on their ability to access basic needs such as shelter, health, food, and in many cases education for their children in their communities of return. In many cases their temporary accommodation (whether in an IDP or refugee camp) can provide them with more security and better access to basic needs. Much like soldiers through DDR programmes, refugees and IDPs are often encouraged to return to their communities and are given assistance reintegrating back into society (such as building materials, training packages, food assistance, etc.) once the conflict is concluded and the situation allows for it.³⁹⁸ This reality emphasises the importance for a country to transition from war to peace as well as the importance of moving away from relief towards development.³⁹⁹ The challenges of displaced persons also emphasises the urgency, importance and need for communities to be supported in their efforts to not only reform but to be seen as socio-economically viable. Moreover, it highlights the need for

³⁹⁸ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29.

³⁹⁹ Jeong, 136-139.

supporting the social and economic welfare of the population support and effectively communicating progress made.

Displaced persons are not the only ones to be negatively affected by the devastation of war. The challenges of restoring deficient infrastructures and defunct services often affect the whole nation. Depending on the context and the duration of the war nationwide infrastructures and services could be in ruins, and there are often high levels of unemployment. This ruin could have pre-date the conflict, or it could have been either a cause or a consequence of the war. Nonetheless, a main effort of the peacebuilding and development processes is to rehabilitate or create these essential functions to assist to return the country to normalcy. Key to this is increasing security through the restoration as well as investment of education, health, transportation, and agricultural infrastructures as well as shifting the nation away from a war economy towards economic revitalization and growth. These complex set processes takes time, adequate resources, ambition, a vision and suitable expertise. Infrastructural challenges, human capacity deficits and macro-economic policies need to be addressed simultaneously. For instance, teachers and healthcare workers need to be trained, schools and healthcare facilities need to be built, roads often need to be built, and sound economic policies need to be developed, agreed upon and implemented. In the short-term, income generating activities (whether vocational training, agricultural support or something similar) or quick impact projects are needed in order to alleviate immediate challenges of transitioning from war. Quick impact projects are designed to have high-impact benefits for local communities through focusing on tangible economic activities and immediate re-settlement challenges.⁴⁰⁰

Economic and social rehabilitation, including local capacity building, are essential for long-term prosperity and obtaining a positive sustainable peace.⁴⁰¹ In sum, the social, economic and environmental dimension attempts to empower the population by: repatriating as well as reintegrating refugees and internally displaced persons; assisting in the re-building of socio-economic infrastructures; supporting short-term projects (commonly known as quick impact projects); and supporting efforts for long-term sustainable development.

Together, these mutually reinforcing dimensions of peacebuilding are seen as a comprehensive way of fostering an environment in which the root causes of conflict are

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 135.

addressed and alleviated. The failure of one dimension, be it security, economic growth, good governance or reconciliation, can have devastating effects on the success of the other vital dimensions.⁴⁰² For instance, there can be no socio-economic development without security or political reform.⁴⁰³ Just like failing to address the large numbers of combatants and weapons in a post-conflict environment poses a problem for the consolidation of security. The UN and donors have learned and accepted that without addressing these concerns the likelihood of succeeding in transitioning a country from war to peace is severely reduced.⁴⁰⁴ This is the model that the UN and IFIs have embraced, and is being implementing around the world in war torn countries.⁴⁰⁵

Peacebuilding in Liberia

As envisaged in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003, a UN peacekeeping mission (the United Nations Mission in Liberia or UNMIL) was established on the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General, spearheading the UN's peacebuilding efforts. The mandate of the mission was under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, amongst other objectives aimed to support the effective and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement; monitor the ceasefire agreement; assist the National Government extend state authority throughout Liberia; and assist with implementation of a DDR programme, the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and preparations for elections.⁴⁰⁶ UNMIL was a comprehensive and multidimensional mission composed of 'political, military, civilian police, criminal justice, civil affairs, human rights, gender, child protection, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, public information,' electoral and support components.⁴⁰⁷ These divisions worked very closely with the newly established NTGL to build their capacity, capabilities and transfer knowledge. The various components of the peacekeeping mission provided peacebuilding support and aimed at addressing many of the root causes of the armed conflict.⁴⁰⁸ Liberia's security was paramount in this endeavour, as was the implementation of the country's DDR programme.

⁴⁰² Bryden and Hänggi, eds., *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, 12.

⁴⁰³ Interview 100.

⁴⁰⁴ Hänggi, "Conceptualising Security," 11.

⁴⁰⁵ See Brahimi Report for outline of UN Peacebuilding framework United Nations, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," para35-46.

⁴⁰⁶ United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia," (New York: United Nations, 11 September 2003), 13-14.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 14-15.

⁴⁰⁸ For more information or specifics about the various components, see Ibid.

Historically Liberia's government institutions did not serve the majority of the people. The NTGL unfortunately was comprised of warlords and faction leaders who signed the peace agreement. That was the price of bringing the war to an end. Few of the members of the transitional government had experience governing, few had expertise running ministries and few had the ambition to improve the plight of the average Liberian. From its inception on 1 October 2003, UNMIL was the *de facto* government in Liberia. The UN was responsible for providing the physical security of the country, it provided humanitarian assistance that allowed most citizens to subsist, it assisted in the rehabilitation of government authority (including paying the salaries of many government employees who were 'seconded' to help rebuild capacity), it organised multiparty elections and was largely responsible for Liberia's transition from a nation of conflict to a peaceful nation on the path to development. In line with the CPA, one of the main functions of UNMIL was to implement a comprehensive DDR programme. UNSC resolution 1509 explicitly gave UNMIL thirty days to produce a plan for a DDR programme, paying particular attention to the special needs of child soldiers and women.⁴⁰⁹

The Strategic Framework for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

By mid-October, a taskforce including key stakeholders from UNDP, UNMIL, the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA and World Vision produced the *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme- Strategy and Implementation Framework*. After consultations with other stakeholders including the NTGL (which had been inaugurated on 13 October 2003) this draft framework was finalised and in line with UN Resolution 1509 was adopted by the end of October.⁴¹⁰ The Strategic Framework provides the context, justification and rationale for the DDR programme, as well as, its objectives, identifies the target groups and provides guiding principles and assumptions. A detailed programme description of the structure of various components including information and sensitisation, disarmament and demobilisation, reinsertion, social reintegration, economic reintegration and special target groups including child combatants, the roles and responsibility of various actors and estimates the DDR programme costs are provided.⁴¹¹ The Strategic Framework, like the CPA and UNMIL's mandate, explicitly acknowledges the special needs of vulnerable target groups

⁴⁰⁹ United Nations, "Resolution 1509 (2003)."

⁴¹⁰ Draft Interim Secretariat, *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework* (Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003).

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

such as children, women and the disabled. As such, provisions for them are included in the DDR programme.

The Strategic Framework proclaims DDR integral to the consolidation of peace and security in Liberia's transition from war to peace. The stated objective of the DDR programme is 'the consolidation of peace through comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation and sustainable reintegration of all ex-combatants into civilian society. It is therefore the hope that the programme will enable ex-combatants to contribute to national development and reconciliation in Liberia instead of posing a threat to peace and stability.'⁴¹² Moreover, the Strategic Framework acknowledges that only a well-coordinated and well-structured DDR programme will assist the government and the UN and the IFIs in achieving their immediate objectives – including to 'consolidate national security as a precondition to facilitating humanitarian assistance, restoration of civil authority, promotion of economic growth and development.'⁴¹³

Institutional Arrangements

The institutional roles and responsibilities were clearly spelt out within the framework. As mandated by the CPA, the temporary interdisciplinary and interdepartmental called the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) was established and was mandated to provide policy guidance and supervision of the DDR programme.⁴¹⁴ The NCDDRR was co-chaired by the Chairman of the NTGL and the UNMIL's SRSG. The Commission was comprised of representatives of relevant government agencies, representatives of the three signatories of the CPA (GOL, LURD, MODEL), ECOWAS, the UN, the AU and the International Contact Group for Liberia (ICGL).⁴¹⁵ The composition of the NCDDRR was very important, as it held the ultimate responsibility over the policy decision-making for the DDR programme, and as co-chairs both the NTGL and UNMIL shared a great deal of responsibility for policy decisions. UNICEF had no representation in the NCDDRR, and thus was not within the inner circle of decision-making regarding DDR policy. In November 2003, the NTGL Chairman appointed Dr. Moses Jarbo, a Liberia associated with LURD faction, as the Executive Director of the NCDDRR.

⁴¹² Ibid., 12.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁴¹⁵ "Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement."

The NCDDRR's aim was to:

- Provide policy guidance to the JIU;
- Formulate the strategy and coordinate all government institutions in support of the DDR programme;
- Identify problems related to the programme implementation and impact; and
- Undertake all measures necessary for their quick and effective solution.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 18.

The Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) staffed by UNMIL, OCHA and UNDP had the primary responsibility for planning and implementing the day-to-day operations of the DDR and in theory, it was supposed to receive its guidance from the NCDDRR. The head of the JIU reported in to the SRSG of UNMIL. As an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental body, the JIU was composed of four units: i) disarmament and demobilisation staff from UNMIL; ii) rehabilitation and reintegration staff from UNDP; iii) monitoring and evaluation staff from UNDP; and iv) information and sensitization from both UNMIL and OCHA. It was envisaged that by pooling expertise from various agencies the necessary expertise would be utilised to efficiently develop and implement the DDR programme, reduce costs and also ensure continuity.⁴¹⁶

The JIU's responsibilities included:

- The planning and implementation of the individual programme components in collaboration with other government departments, NGOs and donors;
- The transparent and accountable administration of the programme (including procurement and disbursements); and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 20.

The JIU was mandated to open five DDR field offices across the country, to be located within UNMIL field offices. These field offices would serve as one-stop-shops for DDR. They would be responsible for providing ex-combatants and their communities with accurate and up-to-date information, counselling, administering reintegration assistance, monitoring and evaluating, coordinating with local leaders and other community-based reconstruction initiatives, sensitizing the local population, reporting on progress and

⁴¹⁶ Draft Interim Secretariat, 20.

trouble-shooting.⁴¹⁷ The field offices were to be staffed with experts dedicated to reintegration, counselling and financial management. The Strategic Framework did not specify where the field offices would be established, nor did it specify a time-frame for their establishment.

As articulated in the CPA and UNSC Resolution 1509, UNMIL had a clear mandate to implement the DDR programme. UNMIL had a great deal of responsibility, not only in the planning phase, but also in providing security, logistical support and ensuring effective execution of DDR and peacebuilding. The success of the DDR programme depended on a number of elements of which were squarely under the aegis of UNMIL – for instance providing physical security and logistical support. Moreover, as disarmament and demobilisation is seen as a military task UNMIL had a leading role above and beyond providing staffing. UNMIL would be responsible for bearing the cost of the military-related activities of disarmament and demobilisation processes, covered within the assessed contribution and budget of UNMIL. The initial cost estimate based on initial estimate of 38,000 combatants was \$20 million for the deployment of peacekeepers, the construction of and supplies to the six cantonment sites and the operating budget for UNMIL's DD activities.⁴¹⁸

UNMIL's DD responsibilities included:

- Provide relevant input and information as well as security assistance and advice with regard to the selection of potential sites of disarmament and demobilisation;
- Provide technical input with regard to the process of disarmament, registration, documentation and screening of potential candidates for demobilisation;
- Develop and install systems for arms control and advise on a larger legislative framework to monitor and control arms recycling;
- Monitor and verify the conformity of the DDR process along recognised and acceptable standards;
- Assume responsibility for effecting disarmament of combatants, maintain a pertinent registry of surrendered weaponry and conduct pre-demobilisation screening and evaluation; and
- Ensure the destruction of all weapons surrendered.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 21-22.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 39.

UNDP had an integral role in the DDR programme and in supporting other peacebuilding initiatives. UNDP was entrusted with the management of a multi-donor DDR Trust Fund, it participated in various DDR related committees and working groups (such as the Technical Coordinating Committee, the Project Approval Committee and DDR Working Group) as well as provided staff and expertise and was responsible for contracting the service providers or implementing partners for the non-military components of the demobilisation process and was wholly responsible for the reintegration component of the DDR programme. Regarding demobilisation and reintegration processes, UNDP managed all administrative arrangements of the implementing partners (their contracting, oversight, financial reporting, etc.).

Most of the money for the DDR programme flowed through the DDR Trust Fund. UNDP created the DEX Unit to administer the Trust Fund. The DEX Unit was responsible for (i) establishing and maintaining accurate records of commitments made to the Fund; (ii) the procurement of goods and services; (iii) screening and the approval of payments; and (iv) monitoring all expenditures and reporting to donors.⁴¹⁹ The Trust Fund was created with a set of regulations and rules of procedures with transparency in mind – including mandatory audits and reporting requirements. The estimated cost for the DDR programme (again, based on 38,000 combatants and excluding UNMIL's estimated contribution of \$20 million mentioned above) was approximately \$50 million, with an average cost per head for the duration of the programme estimated at \$1,410 per combatant.⁴²⁰

According to the Strategic Framework, specialist UN agencies and NGOs had an important role to play in the planning and implementation of the DDR programme. The programme heavily relied upon the expertise and capacity of implementing partners, including UN agencies, local and international NGOs.⁴²¹ Implementing partners with specific expertise and capacity were contracted to fulfil specific and crucial roles. For instance, UNICEF was tasked with the overall responsible for the child DDR components and World Health Organisation (WHO) was responsible for the medical screening and health services during the DDR programme. In both cases, implementing partners were sought to carry out projects or specific services. It is important to note,

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 23-24.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 22.

however, that the contracting of NGOs and specialists were not intended to diminish the JIU's overall responsibility over the programme.

A Project Approval Committee (PAC) was established to facilitate the transparent disbursement of funds and mainstream the programme components. The PAC's responsibility included the review and approval DDR projects irrespective of whether funding for such projects came from the DDR Trust Fund or from other sources (bilateral or other project funding). Implementing partners would submit their proposals to the JIU for the PAC's approval. Membership of the PAC included representation from the EU, USAID, UNDP, UNMIL, UNICEF and the NTGL.⁴²²

The Strategic Framework called for the creation of a multi-departmental Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) to advise the JIU and external programme partners on key issues of planning to provide a forum for technical and strategic consultation.⁴²³ The membership of the TCC included both service providers and donors with a wide range of expertise from relevant agencies with a role in the sector specific elements of programme such as UNMIL, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, FOA, EU, USAID, and appropriate government agencies.⁴²⁴ The Strategic Framework called for the TCC to hold meetings every fortnight, or as required.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

There were many moving pieces in the planning and execution of the DDR programme. The Strategic Framework called for the DDR programme to commence on 7 December 2003. It acknowledged that despite the proposal for DDR to begin within ninety-days of the inauguration of the NTGL (which happened on 13 October) the start-date would be pushed forward several weeks (instead of a mid-January 2004 start) due to fragile political and security situation on the ground.⁴²⁵

Based on the estimated caseload of 38,000 combatants, the Strategic Framework called for a maximum number of 10 cantonment sites to be established in areas of convenience for the three-armed-groups. These locations and arrangements, whether the disarmament

⁴²² Ibid., 25.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 25-26.

and demobilisation sites could either separate sites altogether or could be combined or co-located was to be determined by the NCDDRR/JIU in consultation with UNMIL.⁴²⁶

Identifying suitable cantonment sites and preparing them the DD process required the upgrading or building of adequate facilities including sanitation, water and accommodation. Moreover, there would have to be separate facilities for male, female, boy and girl fighters. According to the Strategic Framework, combatants would remain within the cantonment site (or enter the disarmament site then get transferred to the demobilisation if the sites were separate) for a maximum encampment period of 30 days to allow for adequate time to be disarmed, processed and demobilised.⁴²⁷

UNMIL was responsible for not only securing the sites and the surrounding areas throughout the DD process but also constructing and preparing the sites. In order to remain neutral and foster confidence in the process, the cantonment sites for the various factions would open simultaneously and operate concurrently. Each site would have the capacity for 1,000 combatants at a time, with the daily intake of groups of 250.⁴²⁸ UNMIL would deploy and provide a minimum of 10 MILOBs to each cantonment site, as well as a minimum of a company of peacekeepers at each site to provide security in the area as well as in the cantonment sites.⁴²⁹

Disarmament

The stated objective of the disarmament of both adults and children was to consolidate and enhance security in the country through weapons collection.⁴³⁰ According to the Strategic Framework the process would be straightforward. Upon arrival at the disarmament site, an interview would be conducted by UNMIL peacekeepers to compile the combatant's basic information (such as name, age, affiliation, rank, etc.). The combatant would surrender a weapon or ammunition and a disarmament form would be completed. The weapon would be disabled, catalogued, stored and later destroyed on site. The eligibility of the combatant to formally be admitted into the programme would be assessed by UNMIL MILOBs.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 42-43.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 28.

Although the Strategic Framework outlines a skeletal-framework for the eligibility criteria of combatants in the DDR programme, it declared that the NCDDRR (which had at that point not yet been established) would be responsible for the policy decision-making and providing specifics about the entry criteria.⁴³¹ The Strategic Framework suggested that in order to be eligible to participate in the DDR programme, every combatant must:

Demonstrate participation as an adult combatant member of one of the fighting forces at the time of the signature of the CPA;

or

Be an underage combatant, accompanying minor, unaccompanied minor, or any other participant under the age of 18 or female, presenting with any of the fighting factions;

or

Present acceptable proof of participation in the armed conflict as a member of at least one of the mentioned groups which includes:

A weapon presented by each combatant;

or

A group comprised of up to five combatants with a group weapon.⁴³²

This indeed was the basis of the entry criteria decided by the NCDDRR, although they slightly revised it.

If the combatants met the criteria, their disarmament form would be validated entitling combatants to benefit from the DDR programme, and they would then be assembled with other combatants to be transferred to the demobilisation site. If the combatant was determined not to be eligible for whatever reason, their form would not be validated and they would not proceed to the demobilisation site. This was the outline of the disarmament process which would be completed in one day.

The Strategic Framework indicated some of the preparatory tasks that needed to happen if the disarmament process were to succeed. For instance, the main stakeholders, such as UNMIL, NCDDRR, JIU, needed to develop procedures for each step of the disarmament process. UNMIL needed to identify and prepare the cantonment sites. Staff needed training, including how to interview, how to process the combatants, how to handle child combatants and how to fill in the disarmament forms. UNMIL needed to procure the hardware to roll out the disarmament process – such as computers, printers, wristbands and forms. These were all elements that needed greater attention, to be planned for and organised.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 13.

⁴³² Ibid.

Summary of specific disarmament activities and preparatory tasks

- Elaborating disarmament procedure plan/manual;
- Cantonment identification and preparation;
- Preparation of cantonment administrators to receive combatants;
- Training of UNMIL interviewing personnel;
- Disarmament forms designed and reproduced;
- Rejection procedures established for non-qualifying personnel;
- Training of UNMIL MILOBs in registration procedures;
- Procurement and distribution of wrist bracelets for personnel and weapons;
- Procurement of weapon storage facilities and destruction.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 46.

Child Disarmament

An information and sensitization campaign was planned, encouraging all fighting factions to release their women and children, in order for them to participate in the DDR programme as per the CPA and the fighting factions' commitments to the peace process. Women and children were to be disarmed and processed as a matter of priority ahead of everyone else. Children would be processed according to the Cape Town Principles and in compliance with the Conventions on the Rights of the Child.⁴³³ This meant that they were to be admitted whether they were frontline combatants or auxiliary support. The entry criteria for women and children were different from men. Unlike men who had to surrender a weapon or ammunition, women and children were to be 'accepted in the programme regardless of having submitted or not weapons or ammunition provided they come as part of a fighting unit with any group.'⁴³⁴ Once they were processed and completed disarmament, they were to be transported to the demobilisation site where men and women, boys and girls would be housed in separate facilities for the duration demobilisation process (see chart).

⁴³³ Ibid., 69.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 43.

The Child Disarmament Process

Children will be disarmed through a rapid process with the following key activities:

- Arrival/delivery of child troops at designated sites;
- Collection of arms and weapons from child troops (although this was not required for admittance);
- Registration of arms and weapons;
- Registration and issuance child identification tags;
- Transportation of troops to demobilisation site.

Participating agencies for the child disarmament process at a minimum include UNMIL, ICRC, JIU and UNICEF as the representative of the Child Protection Working Group.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 70.

Demobilisation

The Strategic Framework stated a threefold objective for the demobilisation process. First, the legal status of the combatant would be registered and transferring from combatant to civilian status. Second, the command structures of the group would be broken down. Lastly, the beneficiary would be provided with initial services then return to civilian life.⁴³⁵

The male demobilisation process was different from the women or child process. Once the combatants completed the disarmament process, they would be transferred to the reception areas of demobilisation site. Men, women and children would be separated and receive orientation briefings about the process (the process's objectives, et.), practical information such as the site's facilities and activities. Males would be briefed by MILOBs, while UNICEF would brief both women and children albeit separately. A demobilisation screening interview would be conducted by UNMIL personnel, the combatants would be registered and presented with an identification card confirming their status as civilians. This ID card entitled them to the programme's benefits. The ex-combatant would then be medically screened by WHO staff or contracted specialised medical NGOs.

After being medically screened adults were to undergo reintegration interviews conducted by JIU personnel intended to inform the beneficiaries of their benefits as well

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 28.

as help the JIU gather information in order to assist in the planning and coordinate reintegration programmes. The penultimate step in the adult demobilisation process involved the pre-discharge orientation process where the ex-combatants received career, psychological and health counselling; civic education; and information about the role of the DDRR field offices, the JIU, the reintegration opportunities, etc. Before being discharged the ex-combatants received the first of two instalments of their Transitional Safety Allowance (TSA) totalling \$150, as well as three months of supplementary food support from WFP. The beneficiaries would be discharged, and receive transportation assistance to reach their desired locations for resettlement.⁴³⁶ The TSA was intended as part of a package to assist the resettlement of ex-combatant into their communities, as a safety-net of sorts intended to cover living costs for up to six-months. Their second and final TSA instalment, another \$150, would be available three months later.⁴³⁷ The demobilisation process was envisaged to take a maximum of 30 days before the ex-combatant resettled back into the community of their choice.

Upon entry into the demobilisation process women and children are separated from their male counterparts. This separation of distinct groups of combatants was intended to enable better targeting of special needs. It was also intended to protect them from further abuse by their commanders. UNIFEM would guide and be responsible for the women DDR process, while UNICEF and child protection agencies would play an integral role in the child DDR processes. It was envisaged that during the demobilisation both women and children would be processed and dispatched within 72 hours. After the medical screening, the children would be transferred to UNICEF to be transferred to the Interim Care Centres (ICCs) and women are transferred to separate female-only cantonment site.

The Strategic Framework highlighted many of the practical aspects that needed to be addressed ahead of the launch of the programme. A minimum of six demobilisation sites were called for with the initial prioritisation of three so that simultaneous DD could begin. Due to its sequential and multifaceted process, like disarmament, the demobilisation process necessitated much preparatory work by the responsible entities. For instance, first and foremost, demobilisation sites would need to be identified based

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 47-50.

⁴³⁷ There was no specific mention of whether children would also receive TSA. It says – the NCDDRR/JIU will coordinate with specialised agencies, including UNICEF, to facilitate the reinsertion of children under the age of 16 based on family-based assistance, while 16-18 year olds will be provided with adult assistance, although processed as children. See Ibid., 31.

on an indication of the number of combatants to go through the process. Procedures and operational plans would need to be developed and made operational for tasks such as the transportation of combatants to and from the disarmament and demobilisation sites, how the demobilisation interviews would be conducted, how the pre-discharge orientation (PDO) would be handled and the modalities for the payment of the TSA. Materials would need to be procured and staff would need to be trained to gain competency and knowledge about the various processes to be undertaken, such as the administration of questionnaires, the processing of identification cards and PDO modules and discharge procedures. Lastly, arrangements with implementing partners and service providers, both within the UN and specialised NGOs, would have to be established.⁴³⁸

Child demobilisation

The child demobilisation process was intended to serve and address the special needs of children while providing a child-friendly environment. Separated from women and men upon arrival at the demobilisation site, children would be screened by UNMIL with the assistance of child demobilisation officers and social workers. Children would then be provided with basic provisions including rations of food, water, shelter and personal items (such as a blanket, mat, hygiene kit, clothing, and a bucket). The children would undergo a medical examination conducted by WHO staff or staff from a specialised medical NGO. Within 72 hours of being disarmed (or in exceptional cases 5 day) children would receive their photo ID card and be briefed on the DDR procedures and entitlements before being discharged and transferred to the ICCs for the duration of the demobilisation process.⁴³⁹ The Strategic Framework identified UNICEF, UNMIL, JIU, WHO, medical NGOs, and WFP as playing an important role in the child demobilisation.⁴⁴⁰ UNICEF and child protection agencies would provide guidelines in conjunction with JIU for the operations, procedures and standards for the ICCs and their relevant activities.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 49-50.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 65-69.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 70.

Disarmament and demobilisation process

Assistance component	Disarmament assistance	Demobilisation and discharge assistance
Objective	Disarmament of <u>Groups</u> to consolidate and enhance security situation in the country	Recognition and legal classification of disarmed combatants as <u>individual</u> civilians, renunciation of allegiance to the command structure of any group and provision of initial services to individuals to facilitate return to civilian life
Type	Opportunity (adult & children)	Benefit (adult & children)
Nature	Pre-disarmament sensitisation Operational meetings with commanders and UNMIL. Security Transportation of ex-combatant and families to demobilisation centre	Issuance of beneficiary items. Medical screening. Pre-discharge orientation Reintegration interviews Photo ID Transport allowance and discharge
Timing	1 day	Maximum 30 days
Location	Cantonments	Cantonments
Implementation	UNMIL with NCDDRR policies, technical and operational Guidelines	NCDDRR establishment and management.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 27-8.

Reintegration

The stated objective of the reintegration programme is to provide the ex-combatant with the opportunity to learn basic skills to support themselves through employment, enabling them to contribute towards the community reconstruction process and to facilitate their social reintegration.⁴⁴¹ The Strategic Framework differentiates between social and economic reintegration. Social reintegration refers to the reinsertion of ex-combatants into their communities, as well as the sensitisation and reconciliation that is needed to ensure the ex-combatants can return to and are received by the community of their choice. Economic reintegration relates to the economic, education and employability of the ex-combatants. The objective of economic reintegration is to improve the educational or skills level of the ex-combatant in order to improve their economic viability and thus their reintegration prospects.⁴⁴² Given the history and complexity of the Liberian conflict both components of reintegration are complex, but essential to transforming the country towards peaceful existence.

The Strategic Framework outlined the need for social reintegration to comprise activities for both the ex-combatants and their communities. Adult ex-combatants were to

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 55.

undergo much of the social reintegration activities during the pre-discharge orientation and the information and sensitization process of demobilisation. Getting the ex-combatants to better understand and abide by their role in society, such as how to peacefully manage their social and economic expectations in the post-conflict environment, and an increased understanding of their civic duties was seen by the architects of the Strategic Framework as vital.

In terms of the communities' social reintegration interventions, the Strategic Framework called on the JIU to design and implement an extensive community sensitisation programme that would facilitate the ex-combatants' acceptance into communities and contribute towards the reconciliation between fighters and communities, inform the general public about the DDR's objectives and rationale. The hope was that this would help facilitate social cohesion.⁴⁴³ The DDR Field Offices were to organise post-discharge counselling activities for ex-combatants and communities, and refer ex-combatants to employment and economic opportunities. Reconciliation or cleansing meetings through traditional means were identified to potentially play a positive role in the successful return of ex-combatants into local communities. Moreover, to strengthen social cohesion and help diminish the sense of reward towards the ex-combatants the DDR programme was to finance activities that the community at large could benefit from such as adult education programmes, civic and peace education, the rehabilitation of public spaces such as religious centre and community centres.⁴⁴⁴

The economic prospects of ex-combatant were bleak given the combined impact of the protracted conflict, the absolute breakdown of state services, the 80% illiteracy rate, the astronomical unemployment rate (estimated at 80%) and the inflexible absorption capacity of the market. The economic reintegration assistance was intended to improve their chances of being able to provide themselves with gainful employment, rather than resorting to rent-seeking through the barrel of a gun.⁴⁴⁵ The activities of the economic reintegration assistance were to consist of job counselling, referral services and skills development.

There were various means aimed at developing skills of the ex-combatants such as formal education and an accelerated learning programme; vocational training or

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 32, 61.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 39.

apprenticeships where ex-combatants could learn a trade either through classes or on-the-job training; micro-enterprise support schemes where beneficiaries develop a business plan and receive support to implement their plan; and agriculture support and training.⁴⁴⁶ Where relevant tools and hardware were necessary it would be provided as part of the benefits package (i.e., mechanics would receive tools). The ex-combatants would choose their assistance package depending on their needs, interests and availability. The structure and requirements of each assistance programme were articulated in the Strategic Framework.⁴⁴⁷

The Strategic Framework acknowledged several bottlenecks regarding training of service providers and ex-combatants. It was noted that in Liberia there was a dearth of training courses and service providers. Moreover, it noted an urban-bias of the few courses that were available, both in terms of location and in terms of usefulness in rural areas.⁴⁴⁸ The Strategic Framework expressed its concern and called for them to be addressed.

Economic Reintegration assistance includes:

- Formal education for ex-combatants who wish to complete their primary or secondary education cycle. Higher education will also be eligible for funding although costs will be covered only in part;
- Vocational/practical education and training- Financial assistance can be provided for technical and vocational training of varying lengths as well as for appropriate short courses (masonry, carpentry, bookkeeping, agriculture courses, micro-project management, etc...);
- Group training by a master craftsmen. Financial assistance can be provided to organised groups of ex-combatants and civilians so that craft specialists (e.g. masons, iron workers, bakers, mechanics or tailors) can be employed as technical advisors on a short-term basis in order to provide on-the-job training;

Employment creation through a subsidised apprenticeship or placement in:

- (i) labour-intensive public works;
- (ii) formal enterprises in the private sector; and
- (iii) informal small-scale enterprises;

Rural-biased reintegration support through integrated agriculture and shelter support programme.

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 56.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 33-35.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 59-60.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 55.

Child Reintegration

According to the Strategic Framework, the reintegration of ex-child soldiers was to begin at the Interim Care Centres (ICCs). The best interests of the child were to be taken into account at all stages and the child (where possible) was to be an active part of the decision-making process regarding her/her reintegration. For instance, the older children had the opportunity to choose their reintegration package.

Following demobilisation, child ex-combatants were to remain at the ICCs for between six weeks and a maximum of twelve weeks. During this period, the family tracing and reunification process would be initiated and children would receive psychosocial counselling to assist with the reintegration of the family and broader community, information about their reintegration benefits, education and skills training, medical care, as well as the time and space for games and recreation. Moreover, where needed services were to be provided for child with special needs (such as disabled, girl mothers, etc...).⁴⁴⁹ Consensus within the child protection community believed that reuniting children with their family was the best thing for children. The hope was that most, if not all, the children would be reunited with their families or at a minimum placed in safe alternate arrangements (either foster care or independent living arrangements for older children).⁴⁵⁰

Communities have a large part to play in the successful reintegration of ex-child soldiers. The Strategic Framework called for child protection agencies to not only sensitise communities to the return of ex-child soldiers, but also open a dialogue to voice their communities' concerns about the perceptions of roles and expected conduct of the ex-combatants.⁴⁵¹ To diminish the perception of rewarding ex-child soldiers, communities were encouraged to participate in the identification of initiatives supportive of all community members rather than interventions solely benefiting ex-child soldiers.⁴⁵² This community-based approach was intended to help the acceptance of ex-child soldiers back into communities, and hence their successful reintegration.

The economic outlook for ex-child soldiers was as bleak as it is for adults, if not even more so. The absorption capacity of the Liberian economy was not encouraging. Like

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 71-72.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁵¹ Interview 77.

⁴⁵² Draft Interim Secretariat, 72.

their adult counterparts, in order to facilitate the future economic viability, children need to acquire skills. Moreover, most, if not all, the children had grown up in a conflict environment had little or no education (or at a minimum, quality education). To acquire and develop skills, the Strategic Framework called for the JIU in consultation with UNICEF and child protection agencies to work out the details of the child reintegration programme. Like the adult programme, formal education, apprenticeship and employment schemes were identified as the avenues to pursue.

Reintegration programme

Assistance component	Reintegration Assistance	
	Reinsertion benefit	Reintegration programme
Objective	To assist the ex-combatants resettlement and meet some basic household needs during critical period of post discharge	To provide the ex-combatant opportunity to acquire basic skills (for employment or self-employment) to support themselves and to participate in the community reconstruction process. And, to provide of referral and counselling services to facilitate their social reintegration
Type	Benefit (adult)	Opportunity (adult)
Nature	<u>Adult:</u> two payments <u>Child:</u> Interim care centre. Family tracing and unification, reintegration assistance	Programme opportunities <u>including assistance package for each of the following programmes:</u> Formal education Vocational training Public works Agriculture/livestock/fishing
Timing	Sufficient for an initial period of <u>3</u> months resettlement needs. First payment issued upon discharge and the second three months later	Programme is on the average <u>6 to 12</u> months depending on type of opportunity selected. Ex-combatants are expected to select <u>one</u> programme.
Location	In area of return and through DDRR Field office	In area of return and through DDRR Field office
Implementation	NCDDRR	NCDDRR: Contracts with NGOs Co-financing with NGOs based on MoUs Parallel placement

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 27-8.

Conclusion

Peacebuilding is an evolving concept based upon the need to address the root causes of war in an attempt to either end armed conflict or prevent its recurrence. Liberia was an ideal example of a country where peacebuilding initiative should be implemented. In many ways intervention in Liberia set the standard of peacebuilding interventions. Liberia's post conflict peacebuilding started with the negotiation of a comprehensive peace agreement, followed by the deployment of UNMIL which was a robust

peacekeeping mission with various peacebuilding interventions to support the security, political, social and economic dimensions to assist the nation with its transition from war to peace. Children were acknowledged in the peace agreement, which explicitly called for the implementation of a child DDR programme to address the special needs of children that were recruited and mobilised in warring factions.

The Strategic Framework was a document prepared by the taskforce comprised of UN agencies, donors and representation from civil society intended to provide an outline for the DDR programme, articulate the programme's objectives, the roles and responsibilities of the various actors, and outlined the various processes as well as the necessary preparations. That being said, it explicitly differed decision-making to the responsible actors, such as the NCDDRR. It called on various organisations, such as UNMIL, JIU, and the TCC, to further develop the preparatory plans, procedures and implementation strategy. Although the Strategic Framework was a preliminary input into the process, it was nevertheless an important document and provided significant guidance and the foundation of the DDR programme. It was clear from the Strategic Framework that the special needs of children were acknowledged, and that effectively disarming, demobilising and reintegrating children soldiers was seen as central to the consolidation of peace and security in Liberia. UNICEF and child protection agencies had important roles to play in the DDR programme, not only by advising the JIU and UNMIL on child related activities/processes, but also assist in designing and implementing the child DDR programme.

Given the fact that the Strategic Framework was only finalised at the end of October for a December start date, much remained to be done in terms of planning and preparations and time limited. Important decisions needed to be made quickly by entities not-yet fully functional, such as the NCDDRR or JIU or that lacked the expertise. Moreover, UNMIL's limited deployment and the opportunistic and uncertain political landscape created by the newly formed NTGL was of grave concern to the prospects of the DDR programme.

Chapter 5 – Disarmament in Liberia

This chapter focuses on Liberia's disarmament process, the first component of their DDR programme. Disarmament processes are complex, further complicated by a multitude of actors, competing interests and pressures including time and capacity constraints and security concerns. The Liberian experience was no exception.

Several documents, including the CPA, UNMIL's mandate (UN Security Council Resolution 1509) and the Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme Strategy and Implementation Framework (or Strategic Framework), provided a policy and implementation framework for the DDR programme, including and specifically the child process. These documents clearly outlined how the process should have been implemented, its timelines and delineation of responsibility. However, many challenges, deficits and the complex reality on the ground quickly complicated the 'plan'.

The disarmament process, which ran concurrently with the demobilisation process, began on 7 December 2003 and formally ended on 31 December 2004. It was initially estimated that 38,000 (this figure was later revised to 53,000) combatants would be disarmed. However, by the time disarmament concluded in December 2004, a total of 103,019 people were voluntary disarmed.⁴⁵³ Although it was estimated that as many as 21,000 child soldiers were thought to be mobilised within the fighting factions, only 8,000 were included in the original DDR estimate.⁴⁵⁴ The actual number of children that went through the disarmament process totalled 11,282 (8771 boys and 2,511 girls) or 11 percent of the total disarmed population.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ NCDDRR.

⁴⁵⁴ Draft Interim Secretariat, 39.

⁴⁵⁵ NCDDRR.

An examination of both the theory as well as an analysis of the practice or implementation regarding the Liberian disarmament experience will be provided. There will be a specific focus in this chapter on the child disarmament process. In short, the theory component is *what should have happened* regarding the strategy and implementation framework, delineation of responsibility, ownership issues and the overall conceptualization of the disarmament process. The analysis of the practice explores *what actually happened* on the ground, assessing the child disarmament's strengths and weaknesses as well as its implications for the subsequent demobilisation and reintegration processes.

Children had different requirements for entry into the disarmament process, and were meant to be given special attention over their adult counterparts and were meant to be processed expeditiously. It was clear from the eligibility criteria that the objective of the child process also differed from that of adult combatants. Although the arms collection was the most important element and objective of adult disarmament, children were not required to submit arms to enter or be accepted into the programme. For children, arms collection was a bonus. The main objective was accessing and including children in the process, and enabling them to be demobilised from the fighting factions.

Despite the specific emphasis on the child disarmament process in this chapter, it is important to bear in mind that many, if not most, of the structural and operational challenges that impacted the adult disarmament process had similar effects on the child process. For example, the security situation across the country impacted children and adults alike, as did many of the practical challenges such as the preparedness of the cantonment sites. That being said, the child process necessitated different and sometimes additional elements and resources (human, logistic and financial) compared to the adult process – such as the training of MILOBs and a specific information campaign, aimed at child soldiers, the wider population and their communities.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first is a description of the overall disarmament process, including its various phases and a description of the child disarmament process. An analysis of the key structural and operational challenges of the child process is provided. Lastly, the third section addresses the implication of the challenges on the child disarmament process, as well as, the implications to the

subsequent demobilisation and reintegration processes. Conclusions are drawn as to whether the child disarmament process was a success and whether it contributed to the overall peacebuilding endeavour.

The Disarmament Process

In accordance with the Strategic Framework, the DDR programme officially started on 7 December 2003. Camp Scheiffelin, an old army barracks outside Monrovia, was quickly prepared by UNMIL to handle the first 1,000 combatants to be disarmed. Despite numerous calls to postpone the start of the disarmament process due to inadequate planning and preparations, including from senior UNMIL management, the disarmament programme started as scheduled and soldiers were encouraged to turn up to begin the process.⁴⁵⁶ Although simultaneous disarmament sites were supposed to run concurrently for all the three fighting factions, this was not possible due to the limited deployment of UNMIL peacekeepers throughout the country and a lack of security. In December 2003, UNMIL's peacekeeping and civilian presence was limited to in and around Monrovia with only 5,900 out of the mandated 15,000 peacekeepers being deployed in Liberia.⁴⁵⁷ Suitable disarmament sites beyond Monrovia had not yet been located, let alone equipped for the disarmament or demobilisation processes.

Camp Scheiffelin

The first day of the disarmament process did not go as planned at Camp Scheiffelin the first disarmament site to open. Over 1,000 combatants presented themselves to be disarmed overwhelming UNMIL officials and the facilities that were expecting to process only 250 combatants at a time.⁴⁵⁸ By nightfall, with frustration levels rising, only 500 people had been disarmed and processed. The others remained in a cue outside the disarmament site with their weapons in hand. When word spread that there was a misunderstanding about the benefits (the combatants expected to immediately receive \$150 for surrendering their weapon) things turned violent and riots ensued. Several disgruntle armed combatants began firing their weapons into the air, and the relative stability quickly broke down. Dissatisfied and disgruntle combatants returned to Monrovia and instigated riots and went on a looting spree, which lasted two days and

⁴⁵⁶ Interviews 10, 20, 57, 76 and 84.

⁴⁵⁷ United Nations, "First Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (15 December 2003), 2.

⁴⁵⁸ Ryan Nichols, "Disarming Liberia: Progress and Pitfalls," in *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region*, ed. Nicolas Florquin and Eric G. Berman (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2005), 113.

resulted in the death of nine people.⁴⁵⁹ The situation only improved once the decision and announcement was made by the NTGL Chairman and UNMIL SRSG that disarmed soldiers would immediately receive an advance payment of \$75 for their weapons.⁴⁶⁰ Over the subsequent days, despite the chaos, the overwhelmed staff and facilities, UNMIL managed to disarm a total of 13,125 combatants and collect a total of 8,679 weapons including 2,720,318 rounds of ammunition.⁴⁶¹ A total of 1,189 children were disarmed, many of whom surrendered weapons (had they not surrendered weapons, they wouldn't have been admitted).⁴⁶² Of the combatants that were disarmed at Camp Scheffelin, information on economic reintegration preferences was only available for 50 combatants.⁴⁶³ Due to the breakdown of security and recognition of lack of preparedness, the disarmament process was formally suspended on 17 December 2003 to allow for further planning and preparations.

The decision to pay soldiers \$75 for surrendering their weapons was seen by many as UNMIL and the NTGL compromising and bowing down to the fighters setting a dangerous precedent that plagued the subsequent DDR process as well as the overall perception of security. It emboldened the ex-combatants to protest whenever they did not get their way, and taught them the power they still had over their communities, with or without guns.⁴⁶⁴ Ex-combatants, whether in a group or not, were perpetually seen as a security threat, and dealt with as such – sometimes through reason, sometimes by peacekeepers dispersing the group, sometime through compromise. The fragile peace process could not afford to test the ex-combatants' resolve (including that of the former child soldiers) as to whether they were a perceived threat or whether they would actually mobilise to threaten the peace through violence or unrest if left dissatisfied. It hardly mattered if this dissatisfaction was due to frustrated expectations or something more serious. To varying degrees the outcome was like to be the same.

Some children under 16 years of age were inadvertently paid the \$75 advance, which also set a precedent of giving children cash for participating in the DDR process. The decision whether to give children cash allowances rather than in-kind assistance (which is

⁴⁵⁹ Interview 90.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview 90.

⁴⁶¹ NCDDRR.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ United Nations Development Programme, "Strategic and Operational Framework of Reintegration Support for Ex-Combatants," (Monrovia: UNDP, 2004), 18.

⁴⁶⁴ Interview 84.

what UNICEF and the child protection agencies were advocating) had not yet been made. This precedent further complicated this decision process.

UNMIL, but more specifically SRSG Klein and his senior management team, were heavily criticised for the stalled disarmament attempt and inadequate preparations. Moreover, Klein had a reputation for unilaterally making decision.⁴⁶⁵ Prior to the commencement of the disarmament process many NGOs, service providers and people at UN headquarters in New York knew there were serious problems and that there was a lack of operational readiness. Furthermore, UNMIL was in the start-up phase of the mission. The peacekeeping troop level was low and field deployment of both peacekeepers and civilian staff was limited and as a result the outside the capital security was questionable. The NCDDRR responsible for DDR policy had only met once, on 27 November and that meeting was mired and hijacked by the unresolved appointments of government deputy ministers. UNMIL, UNDP and the JIU were severely understaffed.⁴⁶⁶ Besides the Klein and the NTGL Chairman, who were both worried about the consequences of delaying the DDR programme, there was little support for the 7 December start date. There was an evident split in the UNMIL senior leadership. UNMIL's Force Commander, in charge of the peacekeeping troops responsible for not only the Liberia's security but for handling the disarmament process had only been in charge of peacekeeping forces for over a month and did not support this start date.⁴⁶⁷ It later emerged that while some key DDR implementing partners had mobilised the necessary funding to conduct their DDR responsibilities (namely WHO and UNFPA).⁴⁶⁸

UNICEF together with other child protection agencies drafted a strong communiqué voicing their concerns about the Liberian DDR programme and starting the process too early which was submitted to both UNMIL and UN headquarters.⁴⁶⁹ The document claimed that although UNICEF and the NGO community were involved in the planning of the child processes, they felt severely marginalised from decision-making and that their advice was being disregarded. They cited the lack of preparedness and inadequate facilities of the cantonment sites; insecurity or the lack of security (including around the ICCs); the lack of separate facilities for men, women, boys and girls; the lack of

⁴⁶⁵ Interviews 75, 76 and 84.

⁴⁶⁶ United Nations, "First Progress Report," para 28.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview 39.

⁴⁶⁸ Interview 20

⁴⁶⁹ UNICEF, "Draft Communiqué on Concerns About the Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme."

integrated planning for the implementation of the reintegration process; and the lack of community sensitisation due to an insufficient presence beyond Monrovia as major areas of concern.

Preparation for resumption of DDR

The suspension of the disarmament process allowed for greater planning for the process and review of operational weaknesses. On 15 January 2004 a meeting was held between UNMIL, representative of the NTGL, NCDDRR, the ICGL and commanders of GOL, LURD and MODEL to assess the situation. There was unanimous agreement of four pre-conditions that would need to be satisfied before the DDR programme was to resume. First, an intensive sensitization campaign would be conducted for the combatants to inform them of the DDR process and their benefits. Second, crucial for planning purposes the warring factions (GOL, LURD and MODEL) were required to provide UNMIL with comprehensive lists of their combatants, their locations and their weapons. Third, the cantonment sites and facilities would need to be adequately prepared to be able to handle the influx of combatants. Lastly, UNMIL would need adequate deployment of troops to provide security.⁴⁷⁰

In the following months, much progress was made towards fulfilling these requirements. UNMIL, with support from the JIU and implementing partners, conducted an intensive information campaign to inform combatants of the DDR process, the eligibility process and what benefits they would receive. UNICEF and the Child Protection Working Group developed and conducted a comprehensive and complementary information campaign⁴⁷¹ Target groups of UNICEF's communication campaign included boy and girl soldiers, women associated with fighting forces, commanders, as well as their communities. The strategies of the campaign included advocacy and lobbying of commanders, religious leaders and communities. The purpose was to provide information about the process and explain what rights and benefits children and women were entitled to. The campaign was designed to run for the full duration of the DDR programme.

⁴⁷⁰ United Nations, "Second Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (22 March 2004), para 20.

⁴⁷¹ Child Protection Working Group, "Communication Strategy in Support of DDRR for Children and Women Associated with Fighting Forces," (Liberia: 2004).

The technical and operational plans were finalised and approved by the TCC. UNMIL identified suitable cantonment sites, which were subsequently prepared in collaboration with service providers.⁴⁷² UNMIL troop deployment was steadily increasing throughout the country and as a result security beyond Monrovia was improved. Many staffing vacancies were filled within UNMIL, UNDP and the JIU. However there were a few notable exceptions of persistent vacancies, notably the position of the UNMIL's Child Protection Officer.

The NCDDRR and TCC met several times between January and April and arrived at several important policy decisions that had big implications on the DDR programme. The estimate of combatants was increased to 53,000 from the initial estimate of 38,000 (including an estimated 8,000 children).⁴⁷³ The eligibility criteria for the DDR programme were slightly revised. Male combatants no longer strictly needed weapons to enter the process. In lieu of surrendering a weapon, combatants could surrender 150 rounds of ammunition. This drastically reduced the threshold for entry into the process. Due to logistic and funding limitations (partly due to the increased estimate of combatants) the encampment period of the demobilisation process was reduced to five days, from the original 30 day maximum. The modalities of the TSA had been agreed upon. Of particular interest to this thesis, on 22 March 2004, the policy decision was made by the NCDDRR to pay children TSA (\$300 total). This decision was made contrary to the advice and stark warning of UNICEF and child protection agencies. The implications of this decision will be discussed at greater length later in the demobilisation chapter.

UNMIL's SRSG announced that the DDR programme would recommence on 15 April 2004, with three additional phases.⁴⁷⁴ The recommencement of the DDR programme was scheduled to happen despite one of the four pre-conditions not being met. None of the fighting factions had provided UNMIL with comprehensive lists of their combatants, locations or weapons. Despite not knowing the exact number of expected combatants or their locations there was wide support (and pressure) from the key stakeholders for re-starting the programme.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² United Nations, "Second Progress Report," para 22.

⁴⁷³ This increased estimate has funding implications. National Transitional Government of Liberia, *Liberia Needs Assessment Sector Report on Demobilisation, Disarmament, Rehabilitation and Reintegration* (Monrovia: National Transitional Government of Liberia, 21 January 2004), 4.

⁴⁷⁴ Camp Scheffelin, 7-17 December 2003 was considered Phase One.

⁴⁷⁵ Interviews 20, 33 and 84.

Restart of Disarmament Process

The disarmament sites in Phase II were to be opened in a staggered manner, opening 5 days apart. A total of four disarmament sites would be opened to service the various factions in Gbarnga, Bong County to service LURD on 15 April; Buchanan, Grand Bassa County to service MODEL on 20 April; Tubmanburg, Bomi County on 25 April; and Monrovia, Monserrado County on 30 April (see chart). Although there were still concerns about the preparedness of the sites and despite some minor operational hiccups, the process at all the sites proceeded without great incident. In accordance with the Strategic Framework and Joint Operational Plan a maximum of 250 combatants was admitted in to each site per day. Phase II commenced on 15 April, concluded with the closure of the final site on 15 September (see chart). A total of 51,341 combatants, including 5,227 children were disarmed in this phase and a total of 9,417 weapons and 2,307,980 rounds of ammunition were collected and destroyed.⁴⁷⁶ Phase II alone nearly serviced the total estimated number of combatants (53,000). The reasons for this will be addressed in following sections of this chapter.

Phase III of the DD process commenced in July 2004 with the opening of four new disarmament and demobilisation sites in: Zwedru, Grand Gedah County on 7 July to service MODEL; Ganta, Nimba County on 17 August to service GOL; Voinjama, Lofa County on 8 September to service LURD; and Harper, Maryland County on 1 October. The roll out of these sites was also staggered to allow UNMIL peacekeeping deployment and adequate site preparations. This stage of the disarmament process was in many ways the most difficult due to the remote locations and the logistical complications regarding transportation of combatants and the necessary supplies.⁴⁷⁷ For operational purposes, namely practical issues such as food, water and transportation constraints, the demobilisation encampment period was further reduced from five days to four days.⁴⁷⁸ Phase III ended on 31 October with the closure of the four final disarmament sites. A total of 38,349 combatants including 4,547 children were disarmed and 8,904 weapons and 1,155,127 pieces of ammunition were collected during this phase.⁴⁷⁹ The tally of the number of combatants at the conclusion of phase three was 103,019 including 11,282 children.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ NCDDRR.

⁴⁷⁷ Interview 33.

⁴⁷⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II " (Monrovia: UNDP, March 2005), 28.

⁴⁷⁹ NCDDRR.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

Mobile 'Mop-Up' Operations were conducted and lasted two months running through November and December. The mop-up operations were aimed at disarming residual combatants in remote and inaccessible regions in the north-west and south-east regions who missed previous disarmament attempts. Although the eligibility criteria did not change, due to the nature of this operation participants of this final phase did not go through a full-blown demobilisation process or encampment. UNMIL peacekeepers and MILOBs went to remote areas and disarmed combatants that came forward. Combatants were given identification cards, were medically screened, and were given their full TSA (of \$300) as well as their food/non-food benefits.⁴⁸¹ Due to the remote locations and lack of encampment facilities, the disarmament of this residual caseload was condensed.

Summary of Disarmament and Demobilisation Phases I, II, III

	Cantonment Site	County	Opening Date	Closing Date	Months in Operation
PHASE I	Camp Scheffelin	Montserrado	7 Dec. 2003	17 Dec. 2003	11 Days
PHASE II	Gbarnga	Bong	15 April 2004	8 July 2004	2 Months and 21 Days
	Buchanan	Grand Bassa	20 April 2004	5 July 2004	2 Months and 15 Days
	Tubmanburg	Bomi	25 April 2004	15 Sept.2004	4 Months and 22 Days
	VOA	Montserrado	30 April 2004	8 Sept. 2004	4 Months and 15 Days
PHASE III	Zwedru	Grand Gedeh	7 July 2004	31 Oct. 2004	3 Months and 24 Days
	Ganta	Nimba	17 August 2004	31 Oct. 2004	2 Months and 14 Days
	Voinjama	Lofa	8 Sept. 2004	31 Oct. 2004	1 Month and 23 Days
	Harper	Maryland	1 Oct. 2004	31 Oct. 2004	1 Month

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 28.

⁴⁸¹ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 26.

Number of Disarmed Ex-Combatants by Faction				
Fighting Force	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
AFL	4164	6830	1260	12254
LURD	48	19731	14504	34273
MODEL	11	2054	10283	12348
GOL/Militia(inc.paramilitary)	12	5107	10476	15595
Other	8850	16557	1962	27749
Total	13125	51469	38425	103019

Total Disarmed Children and Adults					
		Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
Adult	M	11297	35306	22678	69281
	F	424	10853	11179	22456
Children	M	1253	4089	3429	8771
	F	151	1221	1139	2511
				Total	103019

Source: NCDDRR. "DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2, & 3." Monrovia: NCDDRR, 16 January 2005.

By the conclusion of the disarmament process in December 2004, the actual number of combatants nearly doubled the revised estimate of 53,000 combatants, and nearly tripled the original estimate of 38,000. All in all, a total of 103,019 combatants were disarmed and a total of 27,000 weapons and over 6 million rounds of ammunition were collected.⁴⁸² A total of 11,780 children were disarmed representing 11% of the total disarmed population.

The Child Disarmament Process

The child disarmament process ran concurrently to the adult process. It started at the pick-up points, where both adult and child combatants were collected to be transported to the disarmament sites (D1 site). In each of the seven counties where disarmament took place a child protection agency was appointed to lead field operations, under the supervision of UNICEF.⁴⁸³ In order to provide expertise and guidance from the initial point of contact child protection personnel were present at the pick-up and transit points. Despite the danger associated to this due to the combatants still being armed (it was viewed as a military process) the child protection agencies volunteered to be present

⁴⁸² NCDDRR.

⁴⁸³ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers and Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration in West Africa* (London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, November 2006), 10.

in order to protect children. When possible, child protection personnel would identifiable children, and organise separate transportation for them to the disarmament sites. This identification was not always easy because of the lack of combatant lists, locations or formal identification providing date of birth (such as an ID cards or birth certificates).⁴⁸⁴ Moreover, because of the differences between the adult and child benefits, mainly the immediate payment of the TSA and lack of clarity about benefits, many children opted to go through the adult process and often lied about their age. The age verification process was an estimation of the child's age by visual means, a series of questions by MILOBs and the child protection personnel about their roles and responsibilities during the war and attempted to assess their knowledge of weaponry.⁴⁸⁵ In contravention to the eligibility criteria many children were turned away at the pick-up points by MILOBs according to credible sources.⁴⁸⁶

At the D1 sites, children who had been identified were separated from adults and were then formally taken through a separate identification and verification process. Any combatant suspected to be underage (under 18 years old) was sent to the identification and verification centre to be processed. This identification verification process was conducted by UNMIL MILOBs with the assistance of child protection personnel. The purpose of the verification process was to determine the eligibility and approximate age of child combatants to ensure children were admitted according to the Cape Town Principles and that the pre-determined eligibility criteria (admittance of children regardless of weapon submission) was applied. According to the operational guidelines, the age verification process was supposed to be carried out by the child protection personnel and the final decision on age would remain with the social worker or child protection personnel.⁴⁸⁷ Like at the pick-up points, the child protection personnel determined the combatants' age range by visual clues, and a number of relevant questions. However, despite there being clear procedures for children at disarmament sites there were continual problems and the procedures were not standardised or followed during the age verification process.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ Interview 23.

⁴⁸⁵ Nichols, 120.

⁴⁸⁶ Interviews 55, 69, 76 and 84.

⁴⁸⁷ UNICEF, "Operational Guidelines for Assisting Children Associated with Fighting Forces in the DDR Programme," (Liberia: UNICEF, 2003), 2.

⁴⁸⁸ These challenges and their implications are addressed in the subsequent section of this chapter.

Once children were identified and verified they were admitted into the process. The admitted children completed the disarmament process and were transferred to the demobilisation or D2 sites. When possible, children were transported separately in accordance with their prioritisation in the DD process.

The mop-up operations were implemented differently to the other phases. Instead of the combatants travelling to the disarmament sites, groups of UNMIL peacekeepers and MILOBs travelled to pre-arranged locations to allow combatants to disarm. UNICEF and child protection agencies formed teams to process the child soldiers and to refer them to child protection agencies in their areas for reintegration activities. The children processed during the mop-up operations did not benefit from ICCs or encampment, family tracing or proper demobilisation activities (such as counselling).

Despite all the operational setbacks and obstacles, a total of 11,282 children were disarmed and formally released by the fighting factions. UNICEF was at the helm of the planning as well as the coordination of the Child Protection Group, which was the main vehicle for arriving at technical decisions and advice regarding children. The child protection agencies had very good plans and procedures for the child disarmament process, although they heavily relied on UNMIL to implement the various components which they did not adhere to. The MILOBs lack of implementing the procedures, entry criteria or proper screening processes severely hindered the child disarmament process.

UNICEF and child protection agencies conducted extensively prepared and advocated on behalf of children ahead of the DDR programme. A thorough sensitization campaign was conducted after Phase I of the disarmament process targeting child combatants, commanders and communities. Ahead of the April 2004 re-start of the disarmament process (Phases II and III) and in the months that followed, as a matter of priority child protection agencies facilitated the preparation for the return of child combatants into their communities. UNICEF and child protection agencies were part of the TCC and provided input and developed operational guidelines to govern child procedures at every stage of the disarmament process from age verification to codes of conduct and transferring children to demobilisation sites. UNMIL peacekeepers, MILOBs and child protection agency staff were provided training on child protection issues – including training on the Cape Town Principles, children's rights, child protection and operational guidelines for the DDR programme. Ultimately, it was because of child protection

agencies, their continuous advocacy and engagement that children received adequate attention during the disarmament process and that they were admitted into the programme at all.

Unlike the adult process where there were vast differences of opinion from stakeholders, the child protection group remained united in their approach. Throughout the process child protection agencies kept the child's best interest at heart in their planning and implementation of services and projects. That being said, unfortunately cohesion and goodwill did not change the reality of the situation, which was that the child process was a sub-set of the adult disarmament process. As a result of this it was severely impacted by many of the same challenges, problems and shortcomings both structurally and operationally of the adult disarmament process. On paper, children were meant to be given priority status during the disarmament process. In practice, this was not the case for reason to be explained. The analysis of these challenges, problems, shortcomings and successes of the child disarmament process are the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

To reiterate, post-conflict environments are seldom straightforward and fraught with complexities. Liberia was no exception to this. Although there was a peace agreement, security was fragile and the transitional government was constantly under threat or perceived instability. Most political decisions were made under tremendous pressure and often had to take into account multiple perspectives – with an eye on the end goal. The only problem is the short-, medium and long-term goal. That being said, there was much tension between short-, medium- and long-term goals. As with many situations in post-conflict Liberia, personal gains, self-interest and misguidance often were a powerful motivator and at times trumped the common goal of transitioning the country from war to peace. It should be noted that personalities, as well as management styles often significantly impacted the course of events, not only regarding the DDR programme, but the entire peacebuilding endeavour.

Structural Challenges

It is unequivocal that Phase I (Camp Scheffelin 7-17 December 2003) suffered from inadequate planning, preparation and operational readiness. The events that took place during the stalled disarmament attempt were predictable and bound to be problematic due to the lack of cohesion within the NTGL, the newly formed but skeletal NCDDRR,

the questionable commitment of the fighting factions, the limited deployment of UNMIL peacekeepers and inadequate disarmament and demobilisation facilities.⁴⁸⁹ UNMIL was under pressure from UN headquarters and donors to return quick dividends and saw disarmament as a way to achieve this.⁴⁹⁰ That being said, these political pressures were no excuse for beginning a process that was neither properly planned nor ready to commence.

The institutions bearing the greatest responsibility for the DDR programme were not properly staffed and in some cases were yet fully functional when the programme began on 7 December 2003. The newly formed NCDDRR had only met once on 27 November and non-DDR related issues hijacked most of that meeting. Representatives from the fighting factions did not want the DDR process to start until there was clarification on the appointment of 84 deputy ministerial posts within the NTGL.⁴⁹¹ The Strategic Framework however was reluctantly endorsed by the NCDDRR at their initial meeting, a mere ten days before the programme was to commence.⁴⁹² At that time, the political will of the factions towards the disarmament process and the peace agreement was questionable – they were more concerned with their allocation of temporary posts in government than their obligation to disarm.⁴⁹³ The JIU was another entity that existed in name only and had serious staffing shortages in each of its sections. Funding for the JIU was also an issue.⁴⁹⁴ The consensus among many people present in Liberia at the time was that the timelines were simply too aggressive to succeed. Moreover, political will to see the process succeed was wanting or at best was unbalanced in favour of the UN and not the warring factions.

In terms of ownership of the disarmament process, it was clear from the CPA and Strategic Framework that the Liberian authorities were to provide guidance, policy decisions and play an active role in not only mobilising support from the fighting factions but also encouraging compliance to the peace agreement. That being said, the NTGL was composed of faction commanders whose interests were not necessarily in line with those embodied in the CPA or shared by UNMIL or the donors. The cohesion was minimal and there were deep divisions within the NTGL. It was unclear whether the

⁴⁸⁹ Interview 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Interviews 3, 57, 66 and 84.

⁴⁹¹ United Nations, "First Progress Report," para 28.

⁴⁹² National Transitional Government of Liberia, 13.

⁴⁹³ Interviews 38 and 88.

⁴⁹⁴ National Transitional Government of Liberia, 13.

NTGL or the former commanders still had the support of and control over their rank-and-file troops who were quickly feeling disillusioned by them.⁴⁹⁵ This political fighting brought into question how genuinely engaged members of the NTGL, and thus the fighting forces, were towards a successful outcome and their ability to objectively advise and guide the DDR process. This lack of trust contributed to UNMIL heavily influencing the planning and implementation processes, especially during the early phases despite presenting many of the key decisions as Liberian owned or driven.⁴⁹⁶ If convenient, both UNMIL and the NTGL blamed each other's shortcomings for policy decisions or shortcomings in the implementation of the process, effectively using each other as scapegoats.⁴⁹⁷

UNMIL was responsible for most of the disarmament planning. That being said, there was a lack of cohesiveness between the political and military command structures within UNMIL, which was not only inconsistent with UN policy but was counterproductive to the intended programme objectives.⁴⁹⁸ This 'political-military divide' was no secret and the separation was both physical and philosophical. The political leadership and military leadership were located in separate buildings about a 30-minute drive from one another with no traffic. Regarding policies, the Force Commander did not want the DDR programme to commence in December 2003, but preferred the programme to start once there were sufficient peacekeeping troops in place to provide adequate security throughout Liberia. He argued that peacekeeping deployment levels in December were inadequate, and that by March 2004, 85 percent of the mandated peacekeepers would be deployed.⁴⁹⁹ Nevertheless despite the advice of many and the disagreement within UNMIL as well as between other UN Agencies and NGOs, UNMIL SRSG Klein pushed for the 7 December start date.

Human capacity and staff was a big issue for much of the duration of the DD process. Civilian recruitment for the mission was very slow, especially in the first five months of its operations (October 2003-February 2004). This effected substantive processes including the planning and logistics of the DDR programme.⁵⁰⁰ UNMIL senior management, including and specifically the Force Commander as well as the two Deputy

⁴⁹⁵ Interviews 16 and 80.

⁴⁹⁶ Interview 90.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview 90.

⁴⁹⁸ United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, "Lessons Learned Study on the Start-up Phase of the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (New York: United Nations, April 2004), 8.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 10.

SRSGs were not appointed until late September and early October respectively. This meant that they were unable to substantially participate in the planning of the mission and the DDR process.⁵⁰¹ Moreover, the remainder of the team that supported UNMIL's leadership was fairly new since the mission was only a few months old. In the early months, the mission lacked a strong political team with in-depth knowledge of the country and region, and there was a dearth of expertise on DDR.⁵⁰² Although many of these staffing and capacity issues were improved and expertise was sought before the April re-commencement, shortages remained including some key posts. In late March and early April there was a rush to hire staff in numerous key positions in the lead up to the DD re-start. In hindsight, the mission was criticised (including by its own personnel) and questions were raised about the overall structure, as well as lack of adequate and insufficient staffing not only during the planning process, but also throughout the DDR process.⁵⁰³

One such post with the responsibility for overseeing the entire DDRR programme, UNMIL's Head of the DDRR Section (Clive Jachnik), was only hired in March 2004 and only arrived in Liberia on 8 April, one week before 15 April start date.⁵⁰⁴ It was clear that lessons had not been learned from Phase I and the necessary attention had still not been paid to the planning of the DDR process. Upon his arrival, he learned that there were no operational guidelines in place for the DDR process. Moreover, UNMIL was planning on simultaneously and concurrently opening and operating four DD sites during phase two despite these sites being not being fully completed.⁵⁰⁵ To the reluctance of his superiors within UNMIL, Jachnik recommended at the NCDDRR meeting on 11 April that the opening of the sites be staggered by a few days to allow for a phased approach to the re-start of the process. The main reason for this was to provide more time to complete the DD sites, train the necessary staff and plan for contingencies were things to go wrong. This recommendation was accepted, and the 'plan' was altered only 4 days before it was meant to start. Unfortunately this contributed to Jachnik's falling out with his superiors, as they wanted to charge ahead. This made his job exponentially harder from that point forward. He also spent the following weeks developing operational guidelines for the process that incorporated lessons and represented a more cautious

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 16.

⁵⁰³ Clive Jachnik, "Lessons from the UNMIL DDRR Programme " (New York: Unpublished - Confidential Memo, 04 February 2005), 2.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 1. Interview 84.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

approach. The Head of UNMIL's DDRR section later argued that this staggered re-start approach averted a re-run of the December fiasco and allowed the process to continue.⁵⁰⁶

Unlike the Klein and the deputy-SRSG-Souren Seraydarian, Jachnik was cited by many of the child protection agencies as sympathetic towards children, and always ready to listen as well as incorporate child sensitive processes in to the process.⁵⁰⁷ He knew his limitation and relied heavily on the specialists, including UNICEF, for advice. His relationship and communication with the child protection agencies and with UNICEF specifically was very good throughout the DD process. Jachnik would intervene and lobby on behalf of the child protection agencies if their messages or objections were not being responded to accordingly whether it on the ground at DD sites or by his superiors.

Another key post that remained unstaffed until February of 2005 was that of UNMIL's Child Protection Officer.⁵⁰⁸ This post was allocated to the mission from its inception, but remained empty until two months after the disarmament and demobilisation process formally ended. People within the NGO, child protection community and even back at headquarters in NY took this extended delay as an indication of UNMIL's senior management's low prioritisation towards child protection and their involvement in the DDR programme.⁵⁰⁹ Practically what this meant was that there was no one within UNMIL specifically advising senior management on the special needs of children at crucial moments. This had become standard practice starting with the peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The situation and lack of internal advocacy regarding child protection was compounded by the reality that the advice that UNMIL received from specialist agencies (such as UNICEF and child protection agencies) were often ignored.⁵¹⁰ UNICEF and child protection agencies felt as though it was a constantly battle to table their concerns and get the attention of UNMIL's senior management. They were not part of the NCDDRR or were they represented in the JIU which meant they were not in the inner policy-making circle. Child protection agencies persistently raised their concerns about child protection and relevant implementation guidelines however few of

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. Interviews 54, 56 and 84.

⁵⁰⁷ Interviews 68 and 69.

⁵⁰⁸ Interview 81.

⁵⁰⁹ Interview 85.

⁵¹⁰ UNICEF, "Draft Communiqué on Concerns About the Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme."

recommendations were implemented.⁵¹¹ Two examples of this, and probably the most significant, were the implementation of the guidelines for age verification process and the decision to issue of Transitional Subsistence Allowance (TSA) to children.⁵¹²

The physical infrastructure of the disarmament sites were a perpetual concern. With bouts of insufficient water, food, fuel, insufficient accommodation and a breakdown of security Camp Scheffelin was ill prepared and the effects were noticeable. These insufficiencies were partly due to the overwhelming number of combatants that presented themselves and partly due to the inadequate preparation and operational readiness of UNMIL and the DDR programme. Although Phase II ran significantly smoother, there were still problems regarding site preparations. Many of the sites were completed only after the disarmament process had begun.⁵¹³ Logistical challenges, such as transportation, transporting supplies, adverse weather and road conditions made things rather difficult at times. According to the UNMIL staff member in charge of camp management, 'water, sanitation, and food supplies as well as unfinished buildings were a constant problem and none of the sites were 100 percent completed when troops started arriving for disarmament.'⁵¹⁴ Although some argued that such problems were inevitable given conditions in Liberia, the dilapidated state of infrastructure, and distribution networks, this was no excuse for poor preparation or an aggressive start.⁵¹⁵

The transportation of supplies and combatants was often a formidable task. The rainy season, which was between May to October, caused significant challenges and severely impacted much of the disarmament process. Heavy rain made many roads impassable. This made things rather difficult as all supplies, including building materials, water, fuel, food, paper work, and all other supplies were delivered by truck to each of the various sites. The collection and movement of combatants also suffered as they needed to be transported from the pick-up points to disarmament sites and then to demobilisation sites. UNMIL peacekeepers provided transportation until the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was awarded the contract by UNDP in May 2004.⁵¹⁶ Despite the

⁵¹¹ Interview 76.

⁵¹² Clive Jachnik, "Disarmament and Demobilisation Questionnaire," (August 2005). Interview 76.

⁵¹³ Interviews 54 and 90.

⁵¹⁴ Interview 54.

⁵¹⁵ Interview 54.

⁵¹⁶ UNMIL troops continued to transport combatants from pick-up points to disarmament sites due to security risks involved.

tough conditions from the start of their operations on 1 June until 15 November a total of 129,472 people were transported.⁵¹⁷

Operational challenges

Apart from the various structural challenges faced by the disarmament process, the process was plagued by operational shortcomings that heavily impacted adults and children as well as the subsequent demobilisation and reintegration phases. The lack of an effective information campaign ahead of the 7 December start had a dramatic impact on the first phase of the disarmament process. The unanticipated increase in the number of DDR participants, (from the estimated 38,000 to 103,019 combatants) casted serious doubts on the efficacy of the eligibility criteria, the screening of combatants and the overall legitimacy of the DDR programme. Moreover, although children were meant to get priority treatment during the disarmament process, this was not systematically translated into action on the ground. The tight timelines of the process stretched the operations resources. And lastly, the fourth the 'Mop-Up' operations were implemented as an after-thought, responding to the recognition that the three earlier disarmament phases did not manage to capture all combatants and there was a residual caseload.

There are a multitude of reasons for the various shortcomings – some avoidable, others not. Operationally, it was not possible to conduct an effective information campaign targeting combatants and communities ahead of Phase I. This was due to very practical reasons. UNMIL, UNICEF, child protection agencies, NGOs, nor humanitarian agencies were functioning beyond Monrovia in the hinterland of the country due to security reasons. UNMIL was still in the start-up phase of its mandate and had not yet deployed troops beyond the Monrovia area. There was simply no entity capable of reaching people beyond Monrovia. Only after the deployment of more peacekeepers did the security situation and the reach of humanitarian actors and NGOs improve. Only then was an intensive information campaign developed as a matter of priority. UNMIL's Department of Information and the JIU targeted combatants aimed at informing them of the DDR programme, their benefits. The campaign was aimed at clarifying misconceptions which had previous disastrous impacts to the DDR programme and security. UNICEF and child protection agencies designed an information campaign and key messages targeted at child soldiers and women, their commanders, communities and religious leaders to complement UNMIL's campaign. The goals of this campaign were

⁵¹⁷ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 48.

not only to inform child soldiers of their benefits, but also to encourage commanders to release their child soldiers and help prepare the communities for their return. Both the adult and child campaigns used various forms of media to portray their messages in local languages – including radio, public announcements, community meetings and rallies, meetings targeting faction leaders, billboards, and newspapers.⁵¹⁸ Like the adult information campaign, the child campaign was designed to facilitate the successful re-start of the disarmament process. Each phase of the campaign that ran throughout the DDR programme had a slightly different emphasis.⁵¹⁹ Unfortunately, however, those responsible for implementing the child information campaign had to make do with limited resources and complained that given the complexity and duration of the conflict the lack of adequate funding prevented the communities from being properly engaged regarding the return of ex-child soldiers.⁵²⁰ Moreover, the child protection agencies complained that it was difficult to accurately communicate the child benefit package because important policy decisions, notably whether they would receive cash-TSA, were only made on 22 March by NCDDRR well after the process had re-started. The modalities of how children would be paid were not agreed upon until 17 May not leaving UNICEF with adequate time to effectively communicate the issue.⁵²¹

Eligibility and Screening

In order to enter into the disarmament programme the combatant had to be a member of one of the fighting factions, present acceptable proof of participation such as a weapons or be part of a group of five combatants with a group weapon or be either under the age of 18 years of age or a female associated with a fighting force. After Phase I and prior to the resumption of the disarmament process, the eligibility criteria were revised in recognition that not all combatants were armed. A combatant could qualify for disarmament and its benefits by surrendering 150 rounds of ammunition, in lieu of a weapon. The eligibility criteria and screening of combatants impacted both the adult and children processes although in different ways. Despite the eligibility criteria changed slightly after Phase I (Camp Scheffelin), at least on paper, it was clear what men, women and children were required to do to be admitted into the programme. That being said, there were three reasons why the disarmament process yielded such a high number of combatants and relatively low weapon collect. First, the threshold for entry into the

⁵¹⁸ Child Protection Working Group.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Interview 56.

⁵²¹ Patricia Huyghebaert, "Trip Report Liberia (May 16-26 2004): Former Child Soldiers and Transitional Safety-Net Allowances in Liberia," (New York: UNICEF (Unpublished), 7 July 2004), 2.

DDR programme was low. Second, the screening process was not rigorous enough and its proper implementation depended on the understanding of the MILOBS performing the screening. Lastly, there was an underestimation of combatants due to the fact that fighting factions never submitted comprehensive lists of fighters. Obviously something went very wrong, in the planning, design and implementation of the screening process. Not only was the initial estimate of 38,000 combatants was far off the mark, but many children could not gain entry into the DDR programme.

In spite of the process being chaotic, turning violent and being suspended a total of 13,125 combatants turned in 8,679 weapons and 2.7 million rounds of ammunition.⁵²² Despite all its shortcomings Phase I yielded a high weapons-to-combatants ratio of 0.7, which was the highest of the entire disarmament process. Unfortunately the remainder of the disarmament process did not benefit from similar ratios. By the end of the process, the combatant-to-weapons ratio had dropped to 0.28 (or four combatants for every weapon) with 103,019 surrendering 27,000 weapons.⁵²³ Prior to the start of the DDR programme, based on the original estimate of 38,000 combatants, it was anticipated that approximately 70,000 weapons would be collected.⁵²⁴ The final number of weapons collected was well below the anticipated number, and the final weapons-to-combatants ratio was amongst the lowest in DDR history.⁵²⁵

The Liberian disarmament process has been heavily criticised by academic and policymakers for having a weak and low entry criteria and for its low combatant-to-weapon ratio. The original criteria, combatants surrendering a weapon or being part of a group submission, were standard for disarmament processes. The revised possibility to gain admittance by presenting 150 rounds of ammunition was considered a very low threshold. With regard to women and children, it was recognised that women and children ought to be treated differently due to their vulnerabilities, and the DDR programme should be as inclusive to them as possible. Although this perceived leniency certainly was not universally accepted by all the stakeholders including UNMIL peacekeepers or MILOBs it was a way to ensure the inclusion of women and children into the DDR programme. Women and children often have their weapons taken away by their commanders ahead of disarmament, preventing them from enrolling in the

⁵²² NCDDRR.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ United Nations and World Bank, *Liberia: Joint Needs Assessment Sector Working Paper - Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (Draft)* (Monrovia: United Nations & World Bank, February 2004), 10.

⁵²⁵ Interviews 25 and 82.

programme.⁵²⁶ Although the eligibility criteria were revised for valid reasons, an attempt to access all combatants, this allowed the entry criteria to be exploited. An arms and ammunition market was created making the means of entry into the DDR programme accessible and readily available. Exploitative commanders and many non-combatants could now cheaply buy their entry into the DDR programme. Old weapons and ammunition (sometimes filled with sand) were being sold in open markets, and in the absence of credible combatant lists, allowed non-combatants to access the \$300 TSA and reintegration benefits offered by the programme.⁵²⁷

Many adults who were not combatants and children who were not genuine child soldiers entered the disarmament process. It became common practice for civilians to either be given a weapon or ammunition by commanders or for them to purchase them from the markets with the intention of profiting from their TSA money. Commanders saw the DDR programme as a way to make money and demanded approximately \$100 of the TSA for allowing civilians to go through the process.⁵²⁸ Depending on where and when it was purchased 150 rounds of ammunition were widely available at local markets for between \$20-50.⁵²⁹ It was also common practice for women to buy ammunition despite not having to surrender either weapons or ammunition. It is impossible to gauge how many civilians (men, women and children) went through the process, but sources estimate as the figure to be as high as 60 percent of the total caseload.⁵³⁰ There was a fear that the dramatic increase of combatants, whether men, women or children, resulted in the exclusion of genuine combatants which was not only a potential threat to security, but also brought into question the overall credibility of the programme.⁵³¹ This was an unintended consequence of entry criteria and the lax screening process as well as the decision to give children cash TSA payments which provided a strong incentive.

As the number of participants was sky-rocketing, there were calls for the eligibility criteria to be revised for a second time in order to strengthen the criteria. Despite these calls to revise the criteria, no further decisions or changes were made. Nor was the MILOBs' training enhanced to strengthen or standardise the screening processes, which

⁵²⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume I," (Monrovia: UNDP, 2004), 18-19.

⁵²⁷ Interviews 10, 20, 33 and 57.

⁵²⁸ Huyghebaert.

⁵²⁹ Interviews 3, 10, 16, 69.

⁵³⁰ Wolf-Christian Paes, "The Challenges of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration in Liberia," *International Peacekeeping* 12, no. 2 (2005): 257.

⁵³¹ By 'genuine combatant' I am referring to combatants that were active members of factions, and not opportunistic people that came forth to take advantage of the DDR benefits.

could have worked towards reducing fraudulent entry.⁵³² The NCDDRR and UNMIL were reluctant to re-visit the criteria at the late stages despite things having gone array for several reasons. UNMIL unequivocally denied that the disarmament process was failing. Both UNMIL and the NCDDRR feared losing the trust of the fighting factions and did not want to renege on their word or send out confused message. Furthermore, the criteria were not re-visited because of the potential negative impact it might have had on the security situation and the potential to spark protests, riots or incite insecurity.⁵³³

When the number of alleged combatants began to soar and weapons collection remained low, it became obvious that things were going drastically wrong. Men with little or no knowledge of how to use a weapon were being admitted on the basis that they fulfilled the criteria. The situation of growing number of participants was further compounded by the lack of a rigorous screening process by the MILOBs. The MILOBs were meant to ask all disarming combatants questions about their participation including their roles and responsibilities during the war, test their knowledge of either their weapons and/or ammunition in an attempt to certify that they were genuine combatants. There were no standard questions or operating procedures for the screening process. The screening process 'depended entirely on the persistence and ability of the MILOBs to ask the right questions and to obtain accurate information.'⁵³⁴ There were language barriers between MILOBs and Liberians (despite having translators present), a constant problem throughout the entire DDR process, which compounded many problems. This inability to prevent the inclusion of non-combatants or opportunistic Liberians into the disarmament process had significant impacts to the DDR programme.

It was clear that the number of combatants was underestimated as a result of the armed-groups never providing accurate information, such as comprehensive lists of combatants and their locations, but also because the original figures were abstractly selected. Not only was planning impossible without accurate information, it allowed the process to be manipulated and exploited throughout. Had there been lists of combatants, this would have prevented opportunistic Liberians (men, women and children) from entering into the DDR process regardless of how enticing the \$300 TSA and benefits were.⁵³⁵ The

⁵³² Interview 52 and United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 22.

⁵³³ Interview 90.

⁵³⁴ Nichols, 120.

⁵³⁵ This is not to say other problems wouldn't have arisen or other ways to manipulate the entry criteria wouldn't have been found.

responsibility for this omission is equally shared by many of the key stakeholders. The factions never fulfilled their obligation to provide lists as mandated by the Strategic Framework and the CPA. After Phase I, UNMIL set the submission of comprehensive lists and the combatants' locations by all three fighting factions as a pre-condition for the resumption of the disarmament process. UNMIL, encouraged by the NTGL, decided to resume the process without this pre-condition having been met. The JIU and the TCC should have demanded that these lists be submitted prior to the start and subsequently the resumption of the DDR process. The genuine combatants should have required their commanders to submit lists to ensure their participation and the legitimacy of the programme. Although such lists would likely have been problematic had they been submitted, many of the operational challenges may have been avoided, and a reduced number of people would have accessed the DDR programme.

Children's ability to access the disarmament process

In theory the Cape Town Principles applied to children throughout the entire disarmament process. Unfortunately although there was very little documentation about the Phase I's screening process, there are indications that it was very problematic for children.⁵³⁶ Despite all the child protection agencies being present, including Save the Children UK, IRC, CAP, Samaritans Purse International Relief, CCF and Don Bosco there were reports of children being rejected entry for not having weapons to surrender.⁵³⁷ In spite of the best efforts of child protection agencies, children had difficulties accessing the disarmament process in phases II and III as well. Although child protection agencies were present at the pick-up sites to assist in the identification of children, there were many reports of unarmed children having difficulty boarding the trucks transporting combatants to D1 sites where the formal disarmament process began. At the pick-up points, once the daily quota of 250 combatants was filled, the soldiers in the queue would be disarmed, given a blank card (with no names) allowing them to return for formal disarmament at a later date. In the absence of comprehensive lists of combatants, their commanders would often take these cards away from the children so that someone else could claim the DDR benefits – including the TSA. This meant that many children were not even getting to the D1 sites to present themselves for disarmament. In other cases, children were competing with adults for entry, often frustrating them as they were often turned away by the MILOBs. There were reports of

⁵³⁶ Interviews 34, 54 and 56.

⁵³⁷ Interview 56.

children trying to get to the D1 sites for up to seven days before deciding to abandon the process altogether despite their alleged prioritisation.⁵³⁸ Children were not given priority status, which would have meant they were transported first, ahead of anyone else, to the D1 sites to be disarmed – with or without weapons.

If and when children managed to get to the D1 sites, they were then scrutinised by the MILOBs, which again resulted in many children being excluded from the programme. Despite the criteria and the CTPs, many unarmed children were simply turned away and were not admitted into the disarmament process by MILOBs. Many of the MILOBs found the eligibility of and procedures for children to be confusing and their understanding of the CTP was often limited.⁵³⁹ Some MILOBs disagreed with admitting unarmed children who had no knowledge of using a weapon, and who therefore did not represent a security threat in their minds. MILOBs often used their discretion whether to admit children into the process or not, and arrived at these decisions in unsystematic ways. This discretionary application of the entry criteria happened despite the presence and advice of the child protection agencies.⁵⁴⁰ The formal complains, including from the Head of UNICEF to the Deputy SRSG and UN headquarters had little impact.⁵⁴¹ Unfortunately no records were kept of how many children were turned away, but this may have contributed to the lower-than-expected number of child combatants.

Age Determination

Determining the age of the combatants was a major challenge during all the disarmament phases. Like the challenges children had accessing the disarmament process, determining the age of combatants had big implications to the process. In theory, where the MILOBs were unable to determine the age of the combatant, social workers representing child protection agencies were meant to have the final say in determining the combatants' age, and thus their eligibility. These procedures were very clearly spelt out in the operational guidelines.⁵⁴² However, in practice, the proper procedures were not always applied and this issue resulted in a constant point of contention between the MILOBs and child protection agencies.

⁵³⁸ Interview 56.

⁵³⁹ Interviews 55 and 56.

⁵⁴⁰ Angela Kearney, "Letter to UNMIL Deputy-SRSG Souren Seraydarian," (Monrovia: UNICEF, 14 April 2004); Huyghebaert, 16.

⁵⁴¹ Angela Kearney.

⁵⁴² UNICEF, "Operational Guidelines for CAFF," 2.

MILOBs would interpret the procedures and arrive at decisions on their own without referring to or seeking the advice of the child protection personnel. As a result, some children were excluded from the process if they had not surrendered weapons. Children were brought to representatives from child protection agencies who did their best to negotiate with MILOBs to include the excluded children, and when that did not work child protection representatives involved superior officers to get children included.⁵⁴³ On 28 April SRSG-Klein had admitted in correspondence to UNHQ-DPKO that UNMIL was having difficulty implementing the Cape Town Principles as they relate to child soldiers and determining the age of soldiers was challenging.⁵⁴⁴ The Head of UNMIL's DDRR Section continuously intervened to persuade MILOBs that child protection agencies had the final say in determining eligibility, which sometimes worked and at other times had little effect.⁵⁴⁵ Moreover, the process of correctly identifying one's age was not helped by the fact that some children who had surrendered arms or ammunition often lying about their age in order to go through the adult process and access the TSA much quicker.⁵⁴⁶ In such cases, where age was difficult to determine, it was impossible to force a combatant to go through the child process unless there was strong supporting evidence that the person was underage.

Implications of challenges

No records were kept of how many children were turned away during and as a result of the screening process or incorrect implementation of the entry criteria. It is clear that fewer children accessed the DDR programme as a result. The children's rights were violated as a result of their exclusion and inability to get to the D1 sites, or to be admitted into the disarmament process. It was widely recognised by child protection agencies as well as UNMIL that legitimate child soldiers were excluded from the programme.⁵⁴⁷ UNICEF estimated the number of excluded children to be around 4,000.⁵⁴⁸

The challenges of getting admitted into the disarmament process were qualitative different for the adult and children. Adults (men) were admitted on the basis of their submission of a weapon or 150 rounds of ammunition, regardless of age. Although to a

⁵⁴³ Interview 23.

⁵⁴⁴ Huyghebaert, part 3 page 3.

⁵⁴⁵ Jachnik, "Disarmament and Demobilisation Questionnaire."

⁵⁴⁶ Interviews 23 and 20.

⁵⁴⁷ Interviews 76 and 90.

⁵⁴⁸ Interview 56.

much lesser extent there were reports of women being denied access to the process, many women and some children came forward with ammunition in the latter phases to secure their place despite not being required to surrender a weapon or ammunition to enter into the process.⁵⁴⁹ Of the total 33,738 women and children processed in the programme, 13,891 surrendered weapons or ammunition despite not having to. The remaining 19,350 were admitted on the basis of the entry criteria as women associated with the fighting factions (WAFF) or child soldiers.⁵⁵⁰ Critics of the revised criteria (the addition of 150 rounds of ammunition) argued that women and children provided easier access to the programme and would exploit the programme, were proven wrong. Official database figures show that 70-80 percent of people admitted into the process through the surrendering of ammunition were adult males, not women or children.⁵⁵¹

The importance of collaboration and shared understanding between UNICEF, child protection agencies and MILOBs cannot be overemphasised.⁵⁵² It was found that MILOBs that had received training from child protection agencies had an increased understanding of the Cape Town Principles and actively implemented child friendly practices – such as prioritising children at the pick-up and disarmament sites or allowing child protection personnel to conduct the age verification process.⁵⁵³ However, this was not standard practice due to rapid turnover and rotation schedules of MILOBs, which meant that not all MILOBs were trained in child protection or even fully understood the child processes prior to their field deployment.

The extremely large number of combatants in the disarmament process had serious implications on both children and adults. The sheer quantity of combatants overwhelmed the cantonment sites, the MILOBs and forced policy decisions due to constrained resources. Moreover, the credibility and accountability of the programme was questioned as a result of the significant and unexpected increase of participants.⁵⁵⁴ The increased number of beneficiaries impacted the subsequent demobilisation and reintegration phases of the programme due to budget and programmatic deficits. More combatants meant each soldier would either be allocated less resources or alternatively more funding would be necessary. This caused an immediate funding shortage, which

⁵⁴⁹ Interview 90.

⁵⁵⁰ Nichols, 120.

⁵⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 50.

⁵⁵² Interview 77.

⁵⁵³ Interview 23.

⁵⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume I," 18.

was not quickly resolved. Although UNMIL was supposed to cover the costs of the disarmament process from its regular budget, it was unable to do so. They borrowed money from the UNDP Trust Fund, which had not received all the money pledged to it. Moreover, the budget was revised to reflect the revised number of combatants expected to participate in the DDR programme (53,000). The initial costs of the DDR programme were estimated at \$50m, which was later revised.⁵⁵⁵ As UNICEF raised most of the funds for the child DDR process on their own and did not rely on the UNDP Trust Fund the increase in participation of adults did not directly impact their ability to deliver services. Besides the financial implication, the increased number of combatants significantly impacted the service providers and their ability to cope with such large numbers. Apart from longer-term consequences the increased caseload made it more difficult to mobilise funding because of the credibility of the programme.

The Spontaneous Disarmament of Children

Although the total number of combatants disarming was dramatically more than planned, the amount of children that went through the disarmament process was less than anticipated. This in part was due to their limited access. Another reason why the child figures may have been smaller than estimated is because some children spontaneously disarmed and demobilised, meaning they left the fighting forces without any assistance and outside the DDR programme. According to UNICEF a number of child soldiers returned home and enrolled themselves in school with no assistance (although they don't know how many were in this situation).⁵⁵⁶ Other child soldiers went to work for their commanders at various rubber plantations, such as Guthrie Rubber Plantation (again, the number of children there was unclear).⁵⁵⁷

There were reports that girls were being excluded from disarmament. In some cases their commanders and 'husbands' were not letting them enter the process.⁵⁵⁸ Many girl soldiers were either pregnant or had given birth during the war and were reluctant to be seen to betray their 'husbands'. Girls were legitimately scared of having to support themselves and their children were they to betray their 'husbands'. 'You don't just run away from the person providing food and shelter for you, because you will have to see them again one

⁵⁵⁵ Draft Interim Secretariat, 39.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview 56.

⁵⁵⁷ Interviews 28 and 38.

⁵⁵⁸ Interview 76.

day.⁵⁵⁹ The exclusion of girls in DDR programming is unfortunately quite common and by no means unique to Liberia. The numbers of excluded girls are unknown, but thought to be significant.⁵⁶⁰ The child protection agencies had anticipated such issues and as a result they gave special emphasis on girl soldiers during their information campaign and sought them out in communities. It is unclear given the widespread exclusion of girl soldiers if this targeted approach worked.

Conclusion

The adult disarmament process was fraught with shortcomings some severe, some minor. Some problems may have been avoidable, while others were not. Few would consider the Liberian disarmament process an outright success. Given Liberia's history and previous failures to disarm combatants, an effective disarmament process was seen as absolutely essential. Although it was plagued with operational hiccups and in spite of the overwhelming number of participants, once disarmament re-started in April 2004 there were no major security incidents. That being said, the large amount of combatants that went through the process and the low ratio of weapons collected prevented the disarmament process from being considered a success as a weapons collection exercise. Many citizens (non-combatants) saw disarmament as a way to benefit and understood that 'disarming' was the key to gaining benefits. They exploited the low entry criteria to gain access to the process and its benefits. The screening could have and should have been more rigorous. However, it should not be forgotten that amongst the 103,019 participants were genuine combatants in need of assistance. For all of its shortcomings, without the disarmament process, the resumption of violence would have been an ever present threat.

Child disarmament was also fraught with many challenges, but also significant successes. The child disarmament process was affected by many of the same problems and challenges faced by the adult process, including the lack of operational readiness of UNMIL and politicisation of policy decisions. Ultimately, the Strategic Framework was not properly adhered to. Despite the inclusive entry criteria and the prioritisation of children on paper, many children were turned away unable to enter the programme. The entry criteria, screening and age verification processes were often misinterpreted and

⁵⁵⁹ Interview 62.

⁵⁶⁰ Interviews 69 and 76.

were not implemented properly by MILOBs who yielded more power than ascribed by the guidelines.

In spite of their best efforts the advice of specialist NGOs were often ignored or marginalised in decision-making processes. Decisions regarding children were taken on political grounds, rather than on grounds of child protection. Operational shortcomings remained problematic throughout the process and were not corrected. A smaller number of children went through the process than was originally thought to be mobilised within the fighting factions. This may have been a miscalculation in the estimates or may have been a result of the problems discussed above.⁵⁶¹

Although the adult and child disarmament processes experienced many challenges, the child process achieved most of what it was supposed to. Unlike the adult process, which was intended primarily to collect weapons, in line with the Cape Town Principles, children were not required to surrender weapons to enter into the DDR programme. The objective of the child disarmament process was access to children encouraging the factions to release the children, enabling them to be demobilised and reintegrated. Yes, some children were excluded from the process, and yes an undetermined amount of children went through the adult process. However, with the objective of accessing children as a benchmark, the child disarmament process had 11,282 success stories.

Child protection agencies worked relentlessly throughout the process to ensure that children received greater attention and that their best interests were taken into account every step of the process. At the disarmament sites, once identified children were separated from their adult counterparts as per the guidelines. Generally, once the children were handed over to the child protection agencies things ran smoothly.

Obviously this narrative only tells part of the story. Like during conflict, children's experiences during the disarmament are not homogeneous. Some children were extremely traumatised, others were less so. Some had good disarmament experiences others did not. UNICEF tried to address and mitigate the sense of rewarding the ex-combatants for their involvement in the conflict through their information and sensitization campaign.

⁵⁶¹ The head of the NCDDRR, Moses Jarbo's view was that the number of child soldiers was miscalculated, possibly intentionally for funding purposed.

Many children grew up and were socialised within the ranks and fighting forces. They entered as children but by the time the conflict ended in 2003 and when they were disarmed, they were adults. This particular experience is not captured in the numbers or statistics.

Bearing in mind that the process was far from ideal, the answer is a cautious yes. Yes, because as a result of disarmament many children were released from the fighting factions and were enabled to demobilise and benefit from the reintegration process. Moreover, the disarmament process allowed the subsequent processes to proceed. Without the peace agreement explicitly indentifying the special needs children and without the efforts of the child protection agencies and donors, children may not have been included in the process at all or may have been further marginalised. Yes, some children did surrender weapons or ammunition despite not being obliged to. Ultimately, the child disarmament process contributed to peacebuilding because having done something, although far from perfect, was better than not doing anything at all. Could things have been done differently or better? Absolutely. Were lessons learned? Hopefully.

Chapter 6 - Demobilisation in Liberia

Sequentially, demobilisation comes after disarmament and is the focus of this chapter. The objectives of demobilisation are threefold – to officially transfer the combatants' status from fighter to civilian, to break down the command structures, and lastly to inform the ex-combatants of their reintegration benefits and provide them with food rations and a TSA before returning to civilian life. The objectives of child demobilisation are identical to that of adults, although the elements are qualitatively different and there are extra elements such as family-tracing and reunification.

Like disarmament, the demobilisation process got its mandate as well as policy and implementation framework from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, UNMIL's mandate and the Strategic Framework. How the child demobilisation process was to be implemented was outlined in the Operational Guidelines for Assisting Children Associated with Fighting Forces in the DDRR Programme.⁵⁶² Various actors had differing degrees of roles and responsibilities in the child demobilisation process. The NCDDRR and UNMIL were responsible for making key policy decisions, UNICEF and the child protection agencies were instrumental in the implementation of and technical guidance for this phase.

As with other peacebuilding endeavours, the ability to adequately demobilise combatants depended heavily on a certain level of security, funding, trust between the parties, economic prospects of the ex-combatants and communities and the capacity of service providers to deliver services and programmes. Apart from the incidents around Camp Scheffelin, there were no major security threats or security incidents disrupted the demobilisation process.

⁵⁶² UNICEF, "Operational Guidelines for CAFF."

Upon completing the disarmament process, combatants were transferred from the disarmament sites to the demobilisation sites (or D2 sites) where they underwent the relevant activities. There were a total of eight demobilisation sites, which were close to the corresponding disarmament sites. Originally, adults were meant to spend up to 30 days at the demobilisation sites but due to the increased number of combatants, funding and capacity constraints this was reduced to 5 days (and reduced further to 4 days in the later stages). Moreover, each demobilisation site remained open far longer than originally planned (by up to four months). Although the inflation in the number of combatants heavily impacted the adult demobilisation process, child demobilisation was relatively unaffected. This was due to several factors including the total number of children that participated in the process was less than the original anticipated number. Also apart from the initial registration process, UNICEF was both in control of the child demobilisation process and the bulk share of its budget. The child demobilisation plan did not alter much, and was generally implemented as envisaged in the original plan. A total of 101,495 combatants were demobilised, including 10,963 children.⁵⁶³ The discrepancy between the number of disarmed and demobilised combatants was due to some participants either being deemed non-eligible or not completing the demobilisation.

The child demobilisation process was very different from that of their adult process. Adults were encamped in the D2 sites for the duration of their demobilisation process, which lasted up to five days. Their demobilisation process ended with their discharge and receipt of the first tranche of their cash TSA, food and non-food items. They then returned to their communities of choice. Children, on the other hand, were immediately separated from their adult counterparts after disarmament. Boys and girls were sheltered in separate facilities within the D2 sites. Unlike in the disarmament process, once at the D2 sites children were given priority. Within 72 hours of entering the D2 sites, children were transferred to the Interim Care Centres (ICCs) where they stayed for up to 12 weeks. Boys and girls were provided with basic services (such as healthcare education, food and shelter) and resettlement modules, while their families were traced and arrangements for their return could be made. Their demobilisation process ended when they were resettled with their families, at which point they too were given the first tranche of their TSA as well as food and non-food assistance.⁵⁶⁴ A total of 34 ICCs were

⁵⁶³ NCDDRR.

⁵⁶⁴ The demobilisation and **rehabilitation** process of both adults but specifically children merged in many ways due to the way the programmes were designed and implemented.

established during the formal demobilisation, with UNICEF provided funding for all but nine centres that were funded by the UNDP Trust Fund.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the issue of children being given cash TSA was one of the key issues of the demobilisation process – both policy wise and operationally. This was an issue that received a disproportionate amount of attention prior to the re-start of the disarmament process in April 2004, during the process and even after the demobilisation process was completed. This will be dealt with at length through the analysis of the child demobilisation process.

The Demobilisation Process

The demobilisation process ran concurrently to the disarmament process. Like the disarmament process, demobilisation had various phases and started in earnest in April 2004. Many of the structural deficits and challenges in Liberia, including the security environment, the dilapidated infrastructure (roads, communication network, and buildings), difficult weather conditions during the rainy season, as well as the limited capacity of service providers similarly impacted the demobilisation process. However, unlike disarmament, which was a purely military endeavour, demobilisation had both military and social components. The participants entered as soldiers and exited as civilians or ex-combatants, having undergone basic education (literacy and numeracy), information and training modules. The child demobilisation process differed from the adult process in a number of ways; which will be covered in depth in this chapter.

Policy and Governance of Demobilisation

UNMIL was ultimately responsible for implementing the disarmament and demobilisation operations. Although they oversaw all the activities at the D2 sites, all of the services and day-to-day functions of the camps were contracted out to various service providers. In most cases the service providers were specialist NGOs.⁵⁶⁵ These services included camp management, delivering pre-discharge orientation, food management and distribution, medical screening, reproductive health and gender based violence awareness, running the Interim Care Centres and transportation of the combatants.⁵⁶⁶ Policy decisions for the demobilisation process were governed by the

⁵⁶⁵ UNICEF, "Operational Guidelines for CAFF," 10.

⁵⁶⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 29.

NCDDRR and UNMIL, while technical decisions were made by the TCC. UNICEF played an integral role in the implementation of the child demobilisation process, including overseeing all ICCs and coordinating the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG). This working group was established to guide all major decisions regarding child protection issues (although their decisions or guidance were not binding). However like with the disarmament process, despite their primacy in the implementation, supervision and monitoring of the demobilisation process, UNICEF remained marginalised in terms of policy decisions, even as they related to children.

Phase I: Camp Scheiffelin

The circumstances and failings of Camp Scheiffelin prevented genuine demobilisation from being implemented in Phase I. It is unclear from the literature, documentation and interviews whether any of the soldiers were medically screened during this first phase of the DD process, how many went through any counselling, or whether they were informed about their reintegration benefits (which at that point had not yet been planned or agreed upon). Very little information was gathered from combatants at Camp Scheiffelin, in fact of the 12,750 combatants disarmed, information on economic reintegration preferences is only available for 50 combatants.⁵⁶⁷ Also, the events that led to the rioting and civil unrest in and around Monrovia was an indication that the early stages of demobilisation had failed to break the command structures, to pacify the combatants or dismantle the warring factions. Camp Scheiffelin quickly became unruly due to an overwhelming number of combatants coming forward, the unpreparedness of UNMIL, the lack of operational planning and inadequate facilities. Resulting in the suspension of the programme, it was clear that Camp Scheiffelin was more about disarmament than anything else. UNMIL mainly saw the DDR programme as an exercise to collect arms and ammunition. The bias favouring disarmament over the other processes, whether demobilisation or the subsequent reintegration, was very clear at this stage of the DDR programme. The Strategic Framework envisaged combatants would spend up to thirty days being demobilised, which was later cut down to five days for budgetary reasons.

With specific regard to children, representatives of child protection agencies including Save the Children (UK), IRC, CAP, Samaritans Purse International Relief, CCF and Don

⁵⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme, "Strategic and Operational Framework of Reintegration ", 18.

Bosco were present at Camp Scheffelin from the start; however, only staff from Don Bosco spent the night to care for the children.⁵⁶⁸ Even in the chaos that ensued, boys and girls were separated from each other and their adult counterparts. Before the security situation deteriorated 76 children (including 10 girls) were transferred to an ICC in Monrovia run by Don Bosco. As a result of them being transferred to the ICC they did not receive the TSA cash advance (of \$75), as did the other combatants. Having been excluded from receiving a cash advance, the child soldiers rioted while at the ICC, creating a security incident for the ICC.⁵⁶⁹ This was in spite of Don Bosco having nothing to do with providing TSA or with making such policy decisions. This early child combatants protests not only taught them the power they held over the DDR organisers and society as a whole, but also set a dangerous precedent for the months to follow. When they did not get their way, they protested. This would often scare UNMIL and the relevant stakeholders into compromising to give them what they wanted.

As evidence that children wielded a considerable amount of attention, three days after the DDR programme was suspended, on December 20 the head of the NCDDRR, Moses Jarbo, went to the ICC to speak to the children in an attempt to calm them. He told them that a mistake had been made and that children should not have been given cash advances.⁵⁷⁰ Needless to say, this was not the response the children were expecting. When the decision on whether or not to give children cash TSAs needed to be made, the riots were a factor in to the policy decision-making process.⁵⁷¹ It is unclear whether these child soldiers got their money in the end and what exactly happened to them – whether they were reunited with their families or whether they simply left the ICCs or attempted to re-join the DDR process as adults when it re-commenced.

The DDR programme was suspended largely to allow UNMIL and the other key stakeholders more time to prepare both operational plans and improve the structural deficits. As discussed in the previous chapter, during the months following the Camp Scheffelin closure, key staff were recruited and key policy as well as operational decisions were taken by UNMIL, the NCDDRR, the JIU and TCC. Procedures were prepared for the demobilisation process, including for registering the combatants, their daily schedule, pre-discharge orientation and the modules being offered. The service

⁵⁶⁸ Interview 69.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview 69.

⁵⁷⁰ Huyghebaert, 4.

⁵⁷¹ Interviews 57 and 90.

providers, who were responsible for all the services at the D2 sites except for security, were contracted and assisted in the planning of procedures and preparation of D2 sites. Under UNMIL's supervision, combatants were used to build some of the sites.⁵⁷² In many cases, the D2 sites were only fully completed after demobilisation re-commenced in April 2004, and after the D2 sites became operational. On the insistence of the head of UNMIL DDR, Clive Jacknick, prior to the camps becoming operational UNMIL staff and the service providers walked each site in a 'practice run' prior to them opening the gates to combatants.⁵⁷³ This was intended to iron out any wrinkles and to verify the camps' set-up were adequate for the process. Unfortunately, these practice runs were only a few days before the sites were scheduled to open and apart from altering procedures, this did not allow very much time to change inadequacies (i.e., structural) were they to arrive.⁵⁷⁴

Phase II & III

The Strategic Framework provided two possibilities with regard to demobilisation sites and indicated that that policy decision would be made by UNMIL. The two options were whether the disarmament and demobilisation areas were to be combined or co-located in one site, or alternatively whether the disarmament and demobilisation sites would be separate. In consultation with the TCC, UNMIL decided not combine the disarmament (D1) and demobilisation (D2) sites. The implications of this meant a demobilisation site would also need to be prepared that in close proximity to each D1 site. Once the sites were identified, UNMIL and its contracted service providers started preparing the D2 sites.⁵⁷⁵ However this decision was only taken after the DDR programme was suspended in December 2003. This was another example that the initial planning of the DDR programme was woefully inadequate prior to its commencement. The demobilisation schedule was in sync with the disarmament process which after Camp Scheffelin (Phase I) was staggered (see chart)

⁵⁷² Interviews 54 and 72.

⁵⁷³ Jacknick, "Lessons from the UNMIL DDRR Programme".

⁵⁷⁴ Interview 84.

⁵⁷⁵ United Nations, "Second Progress Report," 6.

Summary of Disarmament and Demobilisation Phases I, II, III

	Cantonment Site	County	Opening Date	Closing Date	Months in Operation
PHASE I	Camp Scheiffelin	Montserrado	7 Dec. 2003	17 Dec. 2003	11 Days
PHASE II	Gbarnga	Bong	15 April 2004	8 July 2004	2 Months and 21 Days
	Buchanan	Grand Bassa	20 April 2004	5 July 2004	2 Months and 15 Days
	Tubmanburg	Bomi	25 April 2004	15 Sept. 2004	4 Months and 22 Days
	VOA	Montserrado	30 April 2004	8 Sept. 2004	4 Months and 15 Days
PHASE III	Zwedru	Grand Gedeh	7 July 2004	31 Oct. 2004	3 Months and 24 Days
	Ganta	Nimba	17 August 2004	31 Oct. 2004	2 Months and 14 Days
	Voinjama	Lofa	8 Sept. 2004	31 Oct. 2004	1 Month and 23 Days
	Harper	Maryland	1 Oct. 2004	31 Oct. 2004	1 Month

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 27-8.

In line with its mandate, UNMIL was responsible for providing security within the demobilisation sites. Due to the restriction of weapons inside the D2 sites, only unarmed uniformed military were deployed inside each camp. However, UNMIL was also responsible for ensuring that armed troops were within a thirty-minute response time from all D2 sites in case the security broke down and the use of force was deemed necessary.

At the re-start of the DD process in April 2004, things were better organised. Each D2 site had its strengths and weakness, and although not all of them were ready, the improvement to Camp Scheiffelin was noticeable. All of the camps were intentionally located close to main roads and 20km from the capital city of the counties. For instance, the Gbarnga D2 site was within 5km to the city, the Tubmanburg camp was just beyond

the city limits, the Ganta camp was 18km from the city on the main road.⁵⁷⁶ Although each demobilisation site varied in quality, they were all standardised and required to have:

- A reception area for the combatants;
- A camp management area;
- Separate accommodation areas for male, female, boy and girl ex-combatants;
- Separate dining and recreation areas for male, female boy and girl ex-combatants;
- A cooking area;
- Storage areas;
- A discharge area; and
- An unarmed military force and safety area.⁵⁷⁷

The coordination and running of the D2 sites was no easy feat. The initial planning was based on 38,000 then 53,000 combatants. By the conclusion of the demobilisation a total of 101,495 combatants had gone through the process, almost double the highest estimate. This was a constant strain on the service providers as the numbers overwhelmed them.

Several contracted service providers were responsible for one of the following areas at the D2 sites: 1) camp management; 2) food management; 3) pre-discharge orientation; 4) medical screening; 5) reproductive health and gender issues; and 6) transportation. The implementing partners were contracted by UNDP and funded through the UNDP Trust Fund (see chart).⁵⁷⁸ Child protection agencies were considered implementing partners and although the most were funded directly by UNICEF, the DDRR Trust Fund did support some of their work.

The Adult Demobilisation Process

After having been disarmed and in the case of women screened, adults spent up to five days at the D2 sites (this was reduced to four days during Phase III for Zwedru, Ganta, Voinjama and Harper). Upon entry to the D2 sites the adults were registered, photographed for their ID cards, screened and verified. Personal information was collected including socio-economic data, county of origin, preferred reintegration

⁵⁷⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 31.

⁵⁷⁷ UNICEF, "Operational Guidelines for CAFF," 10.

⁵⁷⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume I," 19.

package or occupation and preferred destination of return. This was done by camp management at each D2 site. Men and women were separated for the duration of the demobilisation process, they had separated accommodation, eating areas and recreational space. Every demobilising participant was medically screened under the supervision of WHO, given their non-food item kit (such as clothing, toothbrush, soap, etc.) and assigned to a dormitory. Everyone was provided three meals a day and participated in camp activities everyday (PDO, recreation, and reproductive health and gender component discussed above). On their last day, after eating breakfast and collecting their personal goods, the combatants were given their ex-combatant identification cards (which entitled them to DDDR benefits), collected the first tranche of their TSA and were transported to the drop-off point where they would then travel on to the destination of their choice. Upon completing the demobilisation process and departing the D2 site the combatants were classified as ex-combatant, meaning from that point forth were considered civilians.

Camp Management

A total of three implementing partners (or service providers) were contracted to manage the eight D2 sites. The camp managers were responsible for all services provided at the camps as well as the overall coordination of activities. More specifically the responsibilities of and services provided by camp managers included – orientation and briefing of new arrivals; conducting registration and enumeration; providing recreational input; managing hygiene and sanitation standards; coordinating and ensuring internal security within the camps (although UNMIL provided unarmed security forces); organisation of discharge and departure of demobilised ex-combatants; payment of first tranche of TSA; and the distribution of non-food items (NFIs). At registration, each combatant would be interviewed enabling the camp managers to capture basic personal information, as well as a preliminary indication of their reintegration preferences. The camp managers were responsible for providing daily rosters of combatants, coordinating with all the other implementing partners, ensuring that all the supplies arrived on schedule and liaising with UNMIL on security issues and logistical issues. Camp managers had the first contact with the combatants upon entry to the camp, and the last contact with the ex-combatants upon their discharge.⁵⁷⁹ Regarding children, the camp management worked with the lead child protection agencies to ensure that the guidelines governing the child demobilisation were followed.

⁵⁷⁹ Interview 54.

Food management

Two implementing partners were contracted to manage the food at the eight D2 sites. Premiere Urgence was responsible for the food at all the camps except one that the Norwegian Refugee Council managed (the Tubmanburg camp). The World Food Programme (WFP) supervised all operations and provided the demobilisation programme with food (specifically cereal, pulses, oil, salt and sugar).⁵⁸⁰ The food manager's task was threefold: to provide all beneficiaries (averaging 1,000 per day for the duration of the demobilisation process) with three cooked meals a day; to distribute take-home rations totalling one month of food ration for each ex-combatant and two dependents; and to distribute take-home ration of child soldiers upon reunification with families and departure from ICC.⁵⁸¹ Every combatant in the demobilisation was given a ration card that would be used at every meal as well as for the take-home rations.

Pre-Discharge Orientation

Three implementing partners were contracted to deliver the pre-discharge orientation (PDO) at the demobilisation sites. PDO was a significant component in the demobilisation process, apart from the information and sensitisation campaign, it was the main source of information for the beneficiaries about the DDR programme. PDO provided essential information about the programme's benefits and payment procedures; career and health counselling; information about role of the UNMIL, the NCDDRR and JIU; and community social networks of support.⁵⁸² Each of the implementing partners conducting PDA had a slightly different approach (and methodology), they offered different modules, which were developed in partnership with UNDP and other specialist agencies. The modules covered human rights, child rights, gender issues and women rights, civic education, peace education and conflict resolution. The ultimate goal of the PDO was 'to enhance the capacity of ex-combatants in returning to civil society as new refined citizens.'⁵⁸³ The PDO consisted of a few hours each day over the duration of their encampment. Children did not undergo general PDO sessions, they received all of their information from UNICEF and the child protection agencies.

Medical Screening

There were three national implementing partners contracted to medically screen all the demobilising men, women, boys and girls albeit separately. The World Health

⁵⁸⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 33.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 35.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 36.

Organisation (WHO) trained all implementing partners and closely supervised the medical screening throughout. Their role was to identify ailments or disease that may affect their future economic or social reintegration and when they were unable to treat the ailment on-site they would refer the patients for treatment.⁵⁸⁴ Apart from conducting physical examinations and lab investigations the medical team was also responsible for providing basic health such as vaccinations and when necessary pre- and post-natal assistance. Every D2 camp was staffed with at least one doctor, physician assistants, nurses, certified midwives, laboratory technicians and support staff.

Reproductive Health and Gender Issues

The reproductive health and gender component of the demobilisation was only for the women and girls.⁵⁸⁵ There were two implementing partners contracting for the reproductive health component, which was developed, monitored and supervised by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The partners were responsible for reproductive health screening, counselling and providing treatment including for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). When necessary they provided referrals to hospitals, providing gender-based violence services and counselling to address the psychosocial needs of women and girls.⁵⁸⁶ Counselling was provided on an individual and group basis. In total 25,040 women and girls went through this voluntary component and a great deal of information about these women combatants was collected during this process. UNFPA also conducted a more general and public sensitisation and awareness campaign focussed on reproductive health, safe sexual practices (such as use of contraception), STI prevention, gender-based violence that reached in addition to a total of approximately 97,000 ex-combatants (men and women), a total of 170,000 members of host communities.⁵⁸⁷

Transportation

As we saw with the disarmament process, that the transportation of combatants was a logistical feat. UNMIL provided logistical and transportation support until 1 June 2004 from the pick-up points. However from June 2004 the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was contracted by UNDP to manage and run all DD transportation

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., 45.

needs. This was a difficult task to coordinate because of the sheer quantity of combatants, difficult road conditions and due to the lack of information regarding the location and number of combatants. The demobilisation process required collecting the combatants from the disarmament site, transporting them to the demobilisation site, then upon completion of the demobilisation process (5 days later) to transport them (and their non-food items) to the drop off points or to their areas of origin. A total of 129,472 ex-combatants were transported from 1 June 2004 through 15 November 2004.⁵⁸⁸ Children were mainly transported from disarmament sites to demobilisation sites and then to the ICCs by IOM and UNHCR.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 48.

Implementing Partners of Demobilisation sites

CANTONMENT SITE	CAMP MANAGEMENT*	FOOD MANAGEMENT**	PRE-DISCHARGE ORIENTATION	MEDICAL SCREENING***	REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND GENDER ISSUES****
Gbarnga	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Premiere Urgence	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Injured & Disabled	International Rescue Committee
Buchanan	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Premiere Urgence	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Medical Emergency & Relief Cooperative International	Pentecostal Mission Unlimited
Tubmanburg	Norwegian Refugee Council	Norwegian Refugee Council	Foundation for International Dignity	Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Injured & Disabled	International Rescue Committee
VOA	United Methodist Committee on Relief	Premiere Urgence	Search for Common Ground/Talking Drums	Medical Emergency & Relief Cooperative International*** **	International Rescue Committee
Zwedru	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Premiere Urgence	Foundation for International Dignity	Medical Emergency & Relief Cooperative International*** **	Pentecostal Mission Unlimited
Ganta	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Premiere Urgence	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Human Development Foundation	International Rescue Committee
Voinjama	United Methodist Committee on Relief	Premiere Urgence	Foundation for International Dignity	Human Development Foundation	International Rescue Committee
Harper	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Premiere Urgence	Lutheran World Federation-World Service	Medical Emergency & Relief Cooperative International*** **	Pentecostal Mission Unlimited

* Camp management was supervised by UNMIL and NCDDRR

** Food Management was supervised by the World Food Programme (WFP)

*** Medical Screening was supervised by the World Health Organisation (WHO)

**** Reproductive Health and Gender Issues was supervised by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

***** Participated in Phase IV, mop-up operations

Source: Draft Interim Secretariat. Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 30-48.

The Child Demobilisation Process

Although the child demobilisation process was conducted simultaneously to the adult process, the two processes were separate. The child demobilisation process had different implementing partners, delivered different modules, had different arrangements and timeframes. In line with the DDR guidelines, children were separated from their adult counterparts upon entry to the D2 site at the onset of the demobilisation process. Every D2 site had designated accommodation, recreation, activities and eating areas exclusively for boys and girls (who were also separated from each other). The children remained at the D2 site for up to 72 hours, where they were registered, photographed for their identification cards, medically screened, and participated in orientation and information sessions conducted by UNICEF about their benefits and the DDR process. They would then be transferred either by UNMIL, IOM or UNHCR to an ICC in the county, which was selected on the basis of gender and available capacity. Children spent the bulk of their time during demobilisation, up to twelve weeks, at the ICCs. It was upon arrival at the ICCs when their demobilisation programming really kicked into gear, in terms of not only distancing themselves from the fighting forces, but also being counselling and receiving training programmes.

Prior to the start of the programme in December 2003, in conjunction with the JIU, UNICEF, child protection agencies finalised the guidelines and protocols for Interim Care Centres in Liberia.⁵⁸⁹ These guidelines aimed to provide guidance and outline specifications for the ICCs, in terms of the activities, the facilities as well as the management, allowing for the standardisation of all centres. The guidelines and specifications very clearly outlined who would participate in ICC activities; how long children would stay at the centres; what the centres' staffing structure would be; what training staff would receive; details about the minimum standards for ICC facilities; what non-food items and services the children would receive; what the children's involvement would be regarding the ICCs management and ground rules; the community's involvement with the children at the ICCs; and the monitoring system.⁵⁹⁰

In every county where demobilisation took place a child protection agency was appointed the lead child protection agency and was responsible for coordinating child protection activities in the county. There were a total of 34 ICCs established during the

⁵⁸⁹ UNICEF, "Guidelines and Protocols for Interim Care Centres in Liberia," (Monrovia, Liberia: 3 December 2003).

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

demobilisation process (see chart). Under UNICEF's supervision, eight implementing partners were responsible for the wellbeing of the child combatants and the operations of the centres. Out of the 34 established ICCs, UNICEF funding all but 9, which were funded by the UNDP Trust Fund.⁵⁹¹

Interim Care Centres (ICCs)-Implementing Partners and Funders

Cantonment Site	Implementing Partner	Number of ICCs	FUNDER
Gbarnga	Christian Children's Fund	2	UNDP Trust Fund
	Save the Children- UK	2	UNDP Trust Fund
	Children Assistance Programme*	2	UNICEF
Buchanan	Don Bosco	3	UNICEF
	Samaritan's Purse	1	UNICEF
	International Relief	3	UNICEF
Tubmanburg	Children Assistance Programme*		
	Christian Children's Fund	2	UNICEF
	World Vision International	1	UNDP Trust Fund
	Don Bosco Homes*	1	UNICEF
	World Vision International	2	UNDP Trust Fund
	Christian Children's Fund	2	UNDP Trust Fund
VOA	Save the Children-UK	2	UNICEF
	Don Bosco	2	UNICEF
	Samaritan's Purse	1	UNICEF
	International Relief	2	UNICEF
	Children Assistance Programme*		
Zwedru	Save the Children-UK*	2	UNICEF
Ganta	International Rescue Committee*	2	UNDP Trust Fund & UNICEF
Voinjama	International Rescue Committee*	2	UNDP Trust Fund & UNICEF
Harper	SEARCH* Drop-In Centre	2	UNICEF

* Lead child protection agency in county

Draft Interim Secretariat. *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme: Strategy and Implementation Framework*. Monrovia: Draft Interim Secretariat, October 2003, 45-46.

The broad objectives of the ICCs were:

- To provide interim temporary care, services, and protection for former child combatants and other separated children. Each ICC aimed to improve the educational, psychosocial and physical wellbeing of the children.
- To facilitate the reintegration of former child combatants and other separated children into communities by re-unifying the children with their families through family tracing, or providing alternative care communities.
- To increase the capacity of communities to create and strengthen community-based mechanisms and improve child protection by forming and supporting Child Welfare Committees (CWC) in the communities surrounding the ICCs.

⁵⁹¹ Draft Interim Secretariat, 72.

These Committees aimed to ensure a community based and sustainable social reintegration of demobilised children.⁵⁹²

Through providing a safe, secure and child friendly space the ICCs attempted to achieve these objectives through a number of methods ranging from delivering modules, counselling, and increasing both the children's as well as their communities' awareness of key peacebuilding issues. While at the ICC, children received daily care and their basic needs were provided including food, water and sanitation, medical attention (if and when needed), recreation (time, space and activities), psychological support, informal education, life skills and cultural activities.⁵⁹³ Each child was provided with supplies including clothing, footwear, blankets, a mat, toiletries, a bucket and eating utensils.⁵⁹⁴

The ICC guidelines outlined the requisite staff structure for each centre. Each ICC would have: a centre manager (1), a reintegration officer (1), social workers/tracing agents (1 per 20 children), caregivers (1 per 8-10 children), community outreach workers (2), activity leaders (1 per 40 children), a logistics officer (1), support officers (3), cooks (4 per 100 children), a data clerk (1) and support staff. Staff members either had the expertise or were trained in the areas of child rights, child protection, how to communicate with children, and/or how to conduct family tracing and reunification. All staff members were informed of the ICC guidelines and procedures. When relevant or necessary, staff received specialised training on counselling, gender-based violence and alcohol/drug abuse.⁵⁹⁵ Each implementing partner would determine their competencies and that of their own staff and when necessary supplement it with training, supported by UNICEF.

In the ICCs children were encouraged to develop their own codes of conduct to govern their behaviour. Children were actively involved in the development and implementation of the activities and the centre's programming. This was intended to increase their ownership and participation in the demobilisation process, as well as give them a sense of involvement in their community. This was based on a principle of child protection, that being involved in the creation of ground rules (as well as punishments for breaking them) children would not only increase their involvement the centre's activities, but also

⁵⁹² United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume I," 31.

⁵⁹³ UNICEF, "Guidelines and Protocols for Interim Care Centres in Liberia," 5-6.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 2.

increase their acceptance of the programme, its rules which would help reduce transgressions to the rules that the children themselves set.⁵⁹⁶

Personal histories and information were collected from the children during registration at both the D2 site and upon arrival at the ICCs. The information gathered included the child's name and that of his/her relatives, where they were geographically from, their level of education, details about their recruitment, information about their participation and time associated with the fighting forces. Preliminary indications of their reintegration preferences were also taken. This information was necessary for initiating the family tracking process, which in most cases had begun as soon as that information was gathered and analyzed. Family tracing and re-unification was seen as an integral component of the child demobilisation process based on the principle that their families were the best place for children, in terms of protecting and provided for them and their personal, social and economic development.

The information gathered also helped the ICC better understand who the children that were at the centres, their specific needs and the extent to which they were involved in the conflict. Unfortunately, the personal information gathered during registration was not made public (for understandable reasons) or used to develop profiles of the ex-child soldiers for institutional knowledge purposes.⁵⁹⁷

During their stay at the ICCs the children had daily activities and participated in the counselling session offered by the ICC staff. Most activities were group activities, with the underlining objective of disassociating the children from the fighting forces and changing their mindsets to cope with their experiences and the grip or influence their commanders had on them. Children were given basic literacy and numeracy classes, social skills training (how to behave in society and with each other), and were informed about their reintegration options.

The line between demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration was not clear cut. Child rehabilitation efforts began while at they were in the ICCs. It consisted of educational (literacy, numeracy and social skills), medical, and counselling provisions. Many children found these services amongst the most useful during the DDR process.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁶ Interview 69.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview 65.

⁵⁹⁸ Interviews 46, 61, 62 and focus group III.

The intention was for children to stay at the ICCs for between 4-6 weeks (with a maximum of 12 weeks) while their families were located. During this time they were demobilised, rehabilitated, received counselling, their families were located and their communities were prepared for their return. The 4-6 week timeframe was seen as adequate time to do all of the above, except in extreme cases or where the families could not be located. However, the duration children stay in ICCs varied greatly, the shortest stay being two days and the longest stay was 6 months.⁵⁹⁹ Because of capacity constraints at the ICCs, some children were released before both they and their communities were adequately prepared.

In terms of family tracing and reunification, the ICCs and child protection agencies had an exceptional track record. By 1 March 2005, it was reported that 98% of all children had either been reunited with their families or placed under alternative care arrangements.⁶⁰⁰ Alternative care arrangements, either being placed with foster families or communal independent living arrangements were used when a child's parents (or extended family) either could not be located or for security reasons the child could not return to their community. The remaining 2% of children were foreign CAFF awaiting repatriation and reunification, which was facilitated by the ICRC. UNICEF coordinated the Inter-Agency Task Force on Family Tracing and Reunification that oversaw the family reunification programme.

Drop-in Centres

A total of five Drop-in Centres (DICs) were established to provide services to children who had self-demobilised and had returned home without going through the formal DDR programme. The DICs were set up to provide services to ex-child soldiers who had been resettled back into their communities or spontaneously disarmed and were not part of the formal process. The DICs provided former child soldiers with psychosocial care, counselling, life skills training, recreation and educational opportunities. Moreover, DICs provide accurate information about available services and projects, which were in high demand (especially in the rural areas) for former-child soldiers enrolled in the DDR programme. The DICs also mediated disputes were they to arise between former child soldiers and their communities. Although the focus of the centres was former child

⁵⁹⁹ Interview 69.

⁶⁰⁰ United Nations, "Sixth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (17 March 2005), 5.

soldiers, in line with UNICEF's community-based approach, services were accessible to all the children in the community.

Child TSA

The issue of the child TSA received disproportionate attention in Monrovia, New York and in other capitals around the world in comparison to the rest of the DDR process. Giving children cash for participating in DDR quickly became polarised for many. The evolution of the issue and the decisions taken were well documented by UNICEF through their official correspondence with UNMIL and UN HQ. Despite UNICEF being responsible for the child DDR process, the policy-decision entitling children to cash TSAs was made against their advice.

On 16 February 2004, UNICEF prepared a policy paper on the issue of child-TSA after a TCC meeting on 11 February. UNICEF argued children should by no means receive cash allowances for participating in DDR and that the Liberian DDR experience should follow previous examples where 'children have traditionally received a reintegration package which can be equated to TSA in kind.'⁶⁰¹ UNICEF argued that the TSA for children should be placed in a fund managed by UNICEF and other child protection agencies to cover the costs and needs for resettlement of children. Their logic was that unlike their adult counterparts, children had their basic needs provided for at the ICCs (for up to twelve weeks) and therefore there was no need for them to be given money.⁶⁰² Moreover, it was felt that giving children cash-TSA may be counterproductive to protecting children. It was argued that the cash allowances would likely fuel recruitment and that it would be seen as rewarding children's participation in the conflict, something that child protection agencies were trying hard to avoid. Children would also be put in harm's way from the exploitation of their former commanders who may try to force the children to share their allowances.⁶⁰³ This was the view shared by all the child protection agencies who were very vocal with their objections.

Nevertheless the attempts of the child protection agencies were insufficient in persuading policymakers. On 2 April 2004, the UNICEF Representative Angela Kearney received a letter from Deputy-SRSG Souren Seraydarian informing her that on 22 March 2004, the NCDDRR at their second meeting had taken the decision regarding children

⁶⁰¹ UNICEF, "TSA Payment for Children: Discussion Paper," (Monrovia: UNICEF, 16 February 2004).

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

and 'TSA'.⁶⁰⁴ It was decided that all child combatants were eligible and would receive payment of TSA; and to assuage the fears of child protection agencies stated 'that an utmost care should be exercised in ensuring that child combatants directly benefit from the assistance, regardless of the modalities, or at what point the payment is affected.'⁶⁰⁵ UNMIL was to take full responsibility of and provide the payments from their budget as well as also be responsible for physically paying the children directly. UNICEF was called upon to assist in developing the modalities of payment and to ensure relevant protection issues were adhered to.⁶⁰⁶

A series of letters were exchanged between UNICEF (originating from either Kearney or the UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy) and the head of UN DPKO formally logging complaints, discussing the issue, providing policy advice and advice on implementation concerns while continuously trying to dissuade UNMIL and NCDDRR's decision. On 15 April 2004, Carol Bellamy in a letter to head of UN DPKO head Jean-Marie Guéhenno, articulated why giving cash TSAs could increase children's vulnerability. She argued that the prospect of cash may:

- Encourage commanders to continue recruiting children since the case is often shared with them;
- Create the expectation of future payments in other conflicts, and could be used by recruiters for armed-groups to convince children to join other armed-groups – a particular risk in the context of this sub-region where children are often 'recycled' from one conflict to another;
- Be misused by ex-child soldiers – many of whom were dependent on drugs; and
- Stigmatise children in their communities because they are de facto being rewarded for their association with armed-groups that may have committed violent acts against these communities.⁶⁰⁷

There was a growing recognition including within UNMIL that paying children did represent danger if not handled correctly.⁶⁰⁸ The next few weeks were spent developing the best modalities for paying children. The child protection agencies were weary of being implicated in this decision and did not want to be seen to be responsible for the payment of TSA.

The modalities of paying the children raised security concerns for the ICCs and the implementing partners who ran them. They did not want to handle the money nor be

⁶⁰⁴ Huyghebaert, 6.

⁶⁰⁵ Souren Seraydarian, "Letter to UNICEF Liberia Representative Angela Kearney," (Monrovia: UNMIL, 2 April 2004).

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Carol Bellamy, "Letter to Jean-Marie Guéhenno " (15 April 2004).

⁶⁰⁸ Interview 57.

associated with giving money on behalf of UNMIL/NCDDRR. The memory of the riot that took place the Don Bosco Home ICC in December 2003 during Phase I was fresh in their minds, and rightly so. Before the modalities for the payment of TSA for children were finalised by UNMIL/JIU/NCDDRR/UNICEF, there were riots at several ICCs creating a very volatile security situation. The children demanded their cash while at the ICCs and rioting ensued at the Don Bosco Homes ICC in Buchanan on 8 May, CAP III on 9 May and CCF's in Gbarnga on 20 May.⁶⁰⁹ It turned out their concerns regarding the potential for the payment of TSAs to pose security flash points were well founded.

Over a month after the DDR process resumed, after much to and fro between UNMIL and the child protection agencies, the modalities of how children would be paid their TSA were finally approved on 24 May 2004. It was decided that children would only be given their TSA upon being reunified with and in the company of their parents, family members or guardian. UNMIL would designate sites where the cash would be distributed (not at the ICC for security reasons) to the adult guardian and the child ex-combatant's identification card would be punched, indicating receipt of the first tranche payment. Also upon reunification, the ex-combatant and family member would be given one-month's food rations from WFP. The children would then receive their second tranche of their cash TSA three months later, where their identification card would again be punched indicating the receipt of the second and final tranche.

Once the modalities of paying the children were announced and word got out, the security situation became more settled in the ICCs. How the children would be paid, when and who would pay them was spread through an information sensitisation campaign to both the children directly through the ICC management and to their communities. A week after the decision was made of the 700 demobilised and reunified children 500 had received their first tranche of TSA by 31 May.⁶¹⁰

Mobile Mop-Up Operations

Mobile DD operations were intended to access child soldiers in remote locations. These remote locations were Barclayville, Grand Kru county; Foya, Kolahun and Vahun in Lofa county. UNICEF was part of the mobile units and a total of 588 children were

⁶⁰⁹ Huyghebaert, 7-12.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 12.

disarmed and demobilised in these operations.⁶¹¹ The mop-up phases differed from Phase II and III in so far as they were condensed, not nearly as comprehensive and required no encampment. During these operations the combatants disarmed (although children were not required to surrender weapons their entry into the process was also as problematic as in the earlier phases), they were medically screened, received information about the DDR programme and their benefits, and were paid their entire \$300 cash TSA on the spot. Although the mop-up operations were condensed and not as comprehensive they did serve a purpose of addressing a residual caseload and managed to get 588 children released from the fighting factions.

A total of 10,963 children went through the demobilisation process (see chart). This number was slightly less than the number of disarmed children due to some of the children not completing the demobilisation process, and some foreign children being transferred back to their countries of origin.

Total Demobilised Children

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
Boys	1,072	4,039	3,412	8,523
Girls	117	1,188	1,135	2,440
Total	1,189	5,227	4,547	10,963

Source: NCDDRR. "DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2, & 3." Monrovia: NCDDRR, 16 January 2005.

Analysing the Child Demobilisation Process

Like the disarmament process, demobilisation was aggressively started and arguably began before all plans were in place and the facilities were completed. UNMIL and the NCDDRR needed for the disarmament process to start for political reasons, to save face, but also to address an increasing potentially explosive security risk. The combatants were starting to get more and more hostile by the inactivity. Some of the challenges of the adult and child processes overlapped, and although some of these challenges could have been avoided; others were a consequence of the harsh and inhospitable conditions in Liberia. The preparation of the D2 sites, UNIL's operational readiness and the duration of the demobilisation process was a constant challenge.

⁶¹¹ United Nations, "Fifth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (17 December 2004), 5.

Like the disarmament process and despite the structural and operational challenges a total of 10,963 children (8,523 boys and 2,440 girls) were demobilised.⁶¹² After Camp Scheiffelin things more or less went to plan, with only minor security incidents mainly relating to child TSA. Subsequent to the disarmament process, the demobilisation process was forced to cope with a larger than expected number of adult combatants. The consequence of which reduced encampment periods, from the originally planned 30 day period to five days, (and then four days in the later phases). Funding was constantly constrained due to the large increase in participants, but also donor's delays in disbursing their pledges. The D2 sites, also because of the large number of participants, were forced to stay open for months (in some cases by four months) longer than anticipated.

The large number of combatants put a huge strain on the service providers and their ability to deliver quality services, as well as on UNMIL in terms of their supervisory role over the whole process. Pledged funding originally estimated for 38,000 combatants and then revised for 53,000 was also revised and had to stretch to cover the demobilisation of 101,000 combatants. However despite all of these critical issues, including the reduced encampment period, the demobilisation programme was relatively comprehensive in terms of what was delivered to the combatants.

Although UNICEF was ultimately responsible for much of the child demobilisation process and responsible for important operational decisions through their involvement TCC and despite their responsibility for contracting service providers, they were disempowered to make any policy decisions.⁶¹³ Despite UNICEF's vast expertise, experience with child DDR programmes and good intentions, and UNMIL and the NCDDRR's lack of expertise, experience or interest in children, UNICEF was sidelined during policy decision-making processes.

Comparing Adult and Child Demobilisation

From the onset of their arrival at the demobilisation sites, boys and girls were physically separated from their each other as well as from their adult counterparts. Children were housed, medically screened, fed and played in separate areas within the camp. While adults received all of the programme's activities at the demobilisation sites delivered by various implementing partners, children received all of their information from UNICEF

⁶¹² NCDDRR.

⁶¹³ Interviews 23, 75, 76 and 84.

representatives and received no modules while at the D2 sites. Adults stayed at the D2 sites for the duration of their demobilisation, which was a total of five days (later reduced to four in Phase III). It was at the D2 sites that they received all their demobilisation programming before being discharged. In contrast, children were registered, photographed for the ID cards, medically screened, fed, and received initial counselling by social workers at the D2 sites. After 72 hours at the D2 site children were then transferred to ICCs where they spent between four to six weeks (and up to 12 weeks) before being reunited with their families. If the reunification failed, the children were placed in either foster care or independent living arrangements. It was at the ICCs where children received the bulk of demobilisation programming, including education sessions, life skills training and counselling. Although both adults and children were given a \$300 TSA, the modalities of disbursement were different. Adults received their first tranche upon discharge (hence five days after they entered the DDR process), and children received their first tranche upon reunification with their families (after their encampment at the ICCs, up to twelve weeks after entering the DDR process). The second tranche followed three months later. In both instances, communities throughout Liberia were included in and benefited from the communications campaigns to increase awareness about the DDR programme in a bid to assist the return, acceptance and reintegration of ex-combatants.

Unlike the adult process, child demobilisation was not significantly affected by the large number of people who came forward to benefit from the DDR programme. Yes, the large number of adults put a strain on the service providers at the D2 sites and extended the duration of the demobilisation process, but the impact this had on children was mitigated by the 72 hours they spent at the camps before being transferred to the ICCs. Moreover, the large number of combatants did not force any specific policy or operational decisions regarding children, such as shortening their stay at either the D2 sites or ICCs. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, as UNICEF had operational control of the child demobilisation process, they were able to manage the process as they saw fit. They did this through their participation on the TCC and through control over the child demobilisation budget and through the supervision of the service providers. Secondly, unlike the number of adult combatants, which tripled original estimates, the number of children that accessed the programme was only slightly over the original estimate of 8,000 and thus did not strain services or budgets in the same way as the adult process.

The Implementation of Child Demobilisation Process

Operationally the child demobilisation process was implemented according to plan. Unlike the adult process, which only had its operational guidelines agreed a week before the re-start of Phase II, UNICEF and the child protection agencies developed a set of guidelines to govern the child process and agreed on a set of standards. These guidelines included the operational guidelines for child DDR; the guidelines and protocols for the ICCs (adopted in December 2003); and a code of conduct for staff of child protection agencies (later finalised in July 2004). A consultation process between UNICEF and the child protection agencies responsible for implementing the programme and services produced these comprehensive and detailed documents. The operational guidelines outlined very clearly the special treatment children were to receive during demobilisation, the roles and responsibilities of various actors (including UNMIL, MILOBs, child protection agencies, etc.), what modules and information children were to receive (and by whom) and the procedures regarding the transferring of children to ICCs.⁶¹⁴ The guidelines and protocols for the ICCs clearly outline all aspects of the activities conducted at the ICCs, including procedures relating to the child's intake registration, the length of stay, staffing structures and necessary skills, standards the ICC must meet or exceed, the services and activities to be provided, and the monitoring systems.⁶¹⁵ The code of conduct intended to provide guide child protection agency staff behaviour of was based on five principles: 1) basic needs, safety and protection; 2) non-discrimination; 3) prohibition of sexual abuse and exploitation; 4) personal and professional conduct of highest standard; and 5) child participation.⁶¹⁶ The guidelines were adhered to throughout the demobilisation process and despite a few transgressions that were dealt with swiftly there were no major catastrophes and the rights of the children were respected.⁶¹⁷

Throughout the demobilisation process, UNICEF and the child protection agencies were well coordinated and cooperative with one another, contributing to the success of the programme.⁶¹⁸ Effective information sharing systems were established, such as monthly monitoring reports and the creation of the Child Protection Working Group that contributed to the coordination of efforts. The lines of communication between child protection agencies throughout the country were very open, and there were weekly meetings and forums held to ensure that the process remained on track, and any

⁶¹⁴ UNICEF, "Operational Guidelines for CAFF."

⁶¹⁵ UNICEF, "Guidelines and Protocols for Interim Care Centres in Liberia."

⁶¹⁶ UNICEF, *Code of Conduct for Staff of Child Protection Agencies* (Monrovia: UNICEF, July 2004).

⁶¹⁷ Interview 23.

⁶¹⁸ Interviews 69, 76, and 84.

problems that arose were dealt with quickly. The establishment of these real-time reporting mechanisms were very effective.

The activities delivered at the ICCs were very dynamic, making it hard to categorise them within just one domain – be it rehabilitative, educational, social training, or more broadly demobilisation or reintegration. The activities allowed the children to be nurtured, educated (both in life-skills and numeracy/literacy), counselled and prepared for reintegration. There is no doubt that many of the children arriving at the D2 sites were distrustful of authority, elders and social structures and in many cases were considered “damaged goods”.⁶¹⁹ They were distrustful of their commanders, UNMIL and the NCDDRRR (if they knew what or who they were), but also of their communities that had failed them in the past.⁶²⁰ Many of the children had spent some of their most informative years associated to the fighting factions, having missed out on education and were raised in an environment plagued with armed conflict and temporary social structures. With this came a great deal of uncertainty as to their place in society. The activities delivered during the demobilisation process were geared to addressing these concerns and help the children integrate into a society where armed conflict was no longer was the norm or seen to be acceptable and more traditional social structures re-emerged. The activities were implemented as they were designed. Although slight differences and comparative advantages between service providers existed, UNICEF provided and ensured minimum standards and consistency. The successes and shortcomings of the child demobilisation process will be addressed in the subsequent section.

Successes

The mere reality that child demobilisation happened at all was a success in and of itself. If the child demobilisation process was not separated, it is unlikely that children would have been ejected from the factions and received reintegration assistance. UNICEF and the child protection agencies lobbied extremely hard to ensure separate procedures for children and for children to receive special attention in the DDR programme. This special attention was entrusted to children as a result of the CPA and UNMIL’s mandate. The success of the demobilisation process can be measured in several ways. The first set of question relates to the design, implementation and organisation of the child

⁶¹⁹ Interview 23.

⁶²⁰ Interviews 23 and focus group III.

demobilisation process. Were the guidelines implemented? Was the process properly designed or organised? The second set of questions relates to the success and impact of the child demobilisation process. Did the process achieve its objectives? Did the demobilisation process have a positive impact on the child soldiers?

The answer to the first set of questions is quite straightforward. Regarding the first question, yes, the guidelines were developed in a consultative fashion and were followed; the process was well organised and implemented appropriately.

Regarding the second set of questions and whether the quality of the response was adequate to addressing the troubles of the child soldiers, the answer is not as straightforward. It depends on what qualifies as a success, and in what timeframe. It depends on the experience of individual child soldiers going through the process (the experiences of participants varied greatly) and to what extent they can or have been rehabilitated. It depends on the quality of the care provided, which was not standardised across all child protection agencies and service providers or implementing partners. But most importantly, it depends on the resilience of every child going through the process. The impact of the demobilisation process can be seen as a success. Although the activities delivered during the demobilisation process impacted each child in a different way, they were for the most part well received and the children found them to be useful.⁶²¹ Although the care of children varied slightly, their time at the D2 sites and ICCs served the purpose of isolating the boys and girls, removing them from the immediate control of their commanders and informing them of their rights. Specific areas of success are mentioned below.

Child-Friendly Environment and Comprehensive Procedures

The ICCs unequivocally provided the children with secure and child-friendly environments. Once at the ICCs, intended to provide space and time to heal, the children were cut off from communities and from their former commanders some of who were demanding access to the children (mostly to access their TSA). Children were able to play games, and engage in recreational activities that had evaded them during the conflict. Children were able to participate in classes aimed at addressing their absent school years. At the ICCs, children played an active role in determining the centre's rules

⁶²¹ Interview 69. Although the respondent was a UNICEF employee and may have exhibited bias, she was very candid in her responses overall and was not 'toeing the party line'.

and in organizing their leadership in bid to allow them to participate in the management of the centre.⁶²² While in their care the child protection agencies, children were empowered to actively participate as much as possible in their rehabilitation. Children were given options regarding the activities they could participate in while at the ICCs, they were asked whether they were ready to return to their families and ultimately the older children (above 14 years old) were given the choice of reintegration options. Logistically all elements of the child demobilisation process were well executed.

Family-Tracing and Reunification

Time spent in the ICCs allowed the children time to readjust to life in a non-violent, non-conflict environment. It was an intermediary stage between being associated with the fighting forces and returning to their communities. The emphasis was placed on children family reunification because of the belief that family and their communities were the best places for the children. Rightly or wrongly, this belief is entrenched in the child protection principles and regime. The child protection agencies' staff were specifically trained to conduct family tracing and reunification. Moreover, the extensive sensitization campaigns designed and conducted by UNICEF (in collaboration with UNMIL) in the communities of return played a large role in the communities' willingness to receive the former child soldiers.⁶²³

Family tracing and reunification was arguably the most successful component of the demobilisation process. Initially some children initially gave false information about their families because they were unsure of the ramifications of being returned to their communities or having their families located. Once it became clear that the child protection agencies and the family reunification process was legitimate (or once the children realised it consisted of what the child protection agencies said) they came forward with accurate information. By the end of the demobilisation programme, 98% of all CAFF were reunited with their families. Some children were placed in temporary independent living arrangements. The remained 2% were repatriated internationally back to their families. The family tracing process yielded an almost perfect result.

⁶²² UNICEF, "Guidelines and Protocols for Interim Care Centres in Liberia," 7-8.

⁶²³ Interview with UNICEF Child Protection Officer, Fatuma. Also, Janel Galvanek, "The Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Liberia" (University of Hamburg, 2008), 50-1.

Coordination between Child Protection Agencies

The coordination and collaborative nature between the child protection agencies, including UNICEF, was a positive contribution to the child demobilisation process. UNICEF was responsible for overseeing the components of child demobilisation and successfully nurtured an open and effective relationship with the child protection agency as well as the broader NGO community.⁶²⁴ UNICEF chaired the Child Protection Working Group which allowed it to keep on top of all of the key issues in real-time. UNICEF and the child protection agencies met regularly to either resolve concerns or problems that either arose or were proactive in preventing problems from arising.

With the responsibility of overseeing the child demobilisation process, UNICEF was the main interlocutor between UNMIL. On behalf of child protection agencies, UNICEF was in constant contact with UNMIL to voice the concerns and grievances. Depending on the urgency, grievances were either taken up in real-time, i.e., UNICEF officers speaking directly to UNMIL officers or MILOBs in an attempt to resolve an issue, or via the respective headquarters through letter or cables. The irony was that when the headquarters communicated with one another, as was the case with the issue of child TSA, it was normally the field offices that would inform the discussion, then headquarters would initiate the complaint with their counterpart, followed by a response from the field offices via the headquarters. So effectively, UNICEF-Liberia was communicating to UNMIL, through headquarters in New York and *vice versa*.

Shortcomings

Despite the successes of the demobilisation process, including demobilisation of children, the processes were not flawless. Most of the shortcomings of the adult process were either due to the lack of information collected about the combatants prior to the DDR programme which could have influenced subsequent programming, an unwillingness to adapt the programme to the needs of the combatants or were structural in nature. These problems were universal for the entire DDR process for both adults and child combatants alike. The lack of information or unwillingness to use the information gathered severely impacted the organisers' (UNMIL as well as service providers) ability to differentiate between different categories of combatants in order to tailor their demobilisation experience or programme. The programme was the same regardless of whether the combatants were frontline fighters, auxiliary support, sex slaves, new recruits

⁶²⁴ Interviews 34 and 43.

or veterans. The structural problems highlight the DDR programme's inability to address problems beyond the scope of DDR, such as strengthening governance structures or improving the economic situation or social services (such as healthcare or schooling). Other shortcomings of the demobilisation experience were due to limited human resources. Some child protection agency staff also complained that the time children spent at the ICCs was inadequate to properly disassociate the child soldiers from their former commanders.⁶²⁵

Inadequate Information on the Combatants

Information about adults and children in terms of their experiences, their motivation for joining the fighting factions and how the war affected them simply was not available. During the planning process the service providers made certain assumptions about combatants that influenced all the services they provided, making them very homogenous. Where information about the combatants was available (for example, information gathered upon registration at both disarmament and demobilisation) its impact on subsequent planning was limited. The combatants experienced different levels of anxiety or trauma; their coping mechanisms were diverse and dependent on multiple factors. Moreover, their roles during the war varied vastly as did the amount of time spent in the fighting faction, the level of victimization or agency. Given the UN's prior experience with DDR programmes, this should have been planned for rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. These variances simply were not accounted for in the programming or in the benefits provided. The combatants were viewed as homogenous and received generic programming. All the men received a particular programme, all women went through the similar modules and children went through a set of child modules. What this meant was that porters received exactly the same services as hardened frontline fighters. A combatant that only spent one week associated to a fighting faction received the same treatment to someone that fought for five or even ten years. A sexual slave and a cook were treated the same during and after demobilisation. A child soldier that was associated to their warring faction for 5 years received the same treatment and services as a child that was associated to a warring faction for a month.

Despite the information gathered, children were seen as a homogenous group regardless of their backgrounds, method of recruitment, the duration they spent with and role they performed in the fighting forces. Although the child protection agencies often learned

⁶²⁵ Interviews 34 and 69.

much about the child soldiers, there was no categorisation of children. They all received the same treatment during their stay at the ICC. This meant that the children that served as frontline fighters, cooks, porters, or sex slaves regardless of whether they were forcibly recruited or ‘volunteered’ all went through identical activities together with other kids of very different backgrounds and needs.

With better information and a better capacity or a greater willingness to adapt to the acquired information, this dimension could have been mitigated and improved. The organisers made little effort to address particular issues or individualise or tailor the demobilisation process for different experiences or categories of combatants. Not knowing such details about the combatants’ their level of anxiety, abuse or trauma experienced made it harder to achieve the demobilisation objectives in terms of dissociating, breaking bonds or better preparing for the reintegration process. Moreover, it made it difficult to both solicit certain expertise or to train staff to deal with the variety of issues or cases.

Human Resources

Service providers and specifically the child protection agencies did an admirable job in an amazingly hard environment, against many odds and for a longer period than any had been agreed or anticipated. Because of the protracted nature of the conflict and the dilapidated state of national institutions it was very difficult to find pre-qualified staff. All the child protection agencies provided training for their staff, especially for staff working directly with children, such as counsellors or social workers. That being said, out of necessity, the training was done quickly and the depth of training was therefore limited. For example, in developed countries such as the UK or the United States to be a counsellor or social worker requires years of post-graduate training, clinical practice and close supervision. In Liberia, counsellors and social worker were trained in a few weeks. Limitations in the abilities of staff became apparent with children that were very traumatised or that did not respond positively to the counselling they received.⁶²⁶ That is not to say that the children did not receive good care and in many cases the care they got was certainly better than not receiving any care at all. However, the ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ cases were dealt with in the same way. In many cases a one-size-fits-all approach was taken when it came to counselling.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁶ Interview 69.

⁶²⁷ Interviews 11, 12, 15, 59, 60 and 64.

Problems with Disassociation

As one of the main objectives of demobilisation, breaking the bond between fighters and commanders is a very difficult to achieve. The need for disassociation is especially relevant with child soldiers, where complex relations exist and where many children may turn to their commanders for guidance, security and basic needs such as shelter or food.

Part of the reason why disassociation was not as successful as it should or could have been was because every child soldiers was treated the same irrespective their experiences. Like the rest of the demobilisation process there was not an individualised approach to attempt to pry the children from their commanders' control or influence. Prior to the DDR programme information was not gathered for very practical reasons, the reach of humanitarian organisations was severely limited beyond Monrovia and the warring factions were reluctant to provide specifics. There was little information about child soldiers, their experiences and specifics about their recruitment. Moreover, those responsible for DDR (UNMIL, NCDDRR, JIU, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.) were unable to control contact and social relations beyond the encampment phase. In many cases, adults and children were in contact with their former commanders once they completed the demobilisation process and returned to their communities. Contact between children and their former commanders could be re-established very easily and patterns of this emerged.⁶²⁸

Lack of Alcohol and Drug Counselling

Although it was documented that alcohol and drug abuse of both adults and child soldiers was rampant throughout the conflict there was almost no alcohol and drug abuse counselling during demobilisation. Although alcohol and drugs were prohibited from the ICCs and children were counselled that drugs were 'bad' and underwent awareness modules, there were few programmes to deal with the possible addiction developed during the course of the conflict. There were a few cases of drug use in the ICCs, but were isolated cases and they were dealt with immediately.⁶²⁹ This was a huge oversight due to the fact that these habits were part of their everyday existence within the fighting factions and complicated their ability to reintegrate into society. This oversight was

⁶²⁸ Interview 69.

⁶²⁹ Interview 34.

completely avoidable, preventable and went unaddressed.⁶³⁰ Granted there was no way of controlling the children's conduct once they exited from the ICCs and returned back into their communities, but this only increased the urgency to address their possible addition while the children were encamped at the ICCs.

Inability to Adequately Address Deficits in Return Communities

Children returned to communities where education systems remained in shambles, health systems were broken and basic services were not being provided or met as a consequence of years of neglect and war. In many cases, high levels of insecurity continued, or insecurity took a different shape. In some cases, having returned to their communities some children did not know where their next meal would come from. These structural problems were beyond the scope of the DDR process, but impacted the success of the DDR programme heavily. Although UNICEF worked to support the reconstruction of communities overall, this was a complex and slow process. The national reconstruction would certainly take longer than the envisaged 12 weeks allocated for the ICC encampment or even the demobilisation process. Teachers needed to be trained, schools rebuilt, government services needed to be restored, the economy need to be revitalised and ministries needed to re-assert their control. Opportunities for ex-child soldiers to earn a living were limited after being formally demobilised due to these factors, in particular the state of the formal and informal economies.

The Issue of Child TSA

Interestingly, many child protection advocates identify the payment of the child TSA as one of the main shortcomings of the child DDR process. The decision whether to give children TSA polarised and divided all stakeholders involved. Neither UNMIL SRSG Jacques Klein, NTGL Chairman Bryant nor the head of the NCDDRR Moses Jarbo saw a problem with child soldiers receiving cash allowances. Reflecting on the issue, Angela Kearney saw this shortcoming as a personal failure and her inability to convince UNMIL and the NCDDRR that cash TSAs were not in the best interest of the children and that it may increase their insecurity.⁶³¹ That beings said, she initially underestimated the political nature of this issue and the complexity of the conflict created various constituencies, including amongst commanders and the NCDDRR who needed to be seen to provide for their child soldiers. The commanders felt children receiving cash

⁶³⁰ Interview 20.

⁶³¹ Interview 76.

allowances were in their best interest in case the conflict reignited to and they needed to re-recruitment them. Moreover, the NCDDRR was vested in trying to ensure the ex-combatants were placated by the DDR benefits. The cash TSA was a means to this end.

The difference of opinion between senior UN management (both in Liberia and New York) remained evident throughout and beyond the decision-making process. During a 'DD lessons learned' meeting intended to inform planning and decision-making for the reintegration process (held 8 December 2004 in Monrovia), the head of the JIU Charles Achodo commented on the issue of cash TSA for children and said that a balance needed to be made 'between protection issues and the consideration for incentives' and that it would have been dangerous excluding so many fighters from receiving the cash incentive.⁶³²

There were some negative consequences of children receiving cash TSAs. Giving children cash TSA did in some cases result in increased insecurity.⁶³³ There were documented cases of former child soldiers having to share their TSA and being extorted by their former commanders. Although there were cases of children using the cash for drugs and alcohol, due to lack of information, it is inconclusive whether the negative scenarios portrayed by the child protection agencies were the norm or exception. Moreover, it is also unclear whether children (or adults for that matter) responsibly invested the money. Members of communities where former soldiers returned perceived the TSA, whether given to adults or children, as 'blood money' and resented them for being rewarded for their involvement in the conflict.⁶³⁴ To some this justified the misuse of the cash.⁶³⁵

On the other hand, a potential positive response to children being given cash TSA was that it attracted child soldiers to participate in the DDR programme and did help placate them. It became pretty clear that had children not be given cash TSA, riots and insecurity may have ensued as was seen at the CCF ICC. Moreover, the decision to not pay children cash TSAs certainly would have undermined the perceived 'fairness' of the DDR process in the eyes of the child combatants and their commanders, which could have put the whole DDR programme in a precarious position. This was the position

⁶³² UNICEF, *The DD Wrap up Session: Meeting Notes* (Monrovia, Liberia, 8 December 2004).

⁶³³ Interviews 12, 14, 15, 46, 47 and 50.

⁶³⁴ Focus group II.

⁶³⁵ Interview 96.

taken by Klein, Achoda and Jarbo, who all publicly spoke about child soldiers being entitled to cash TSAs.⁶³⁶

The above examples of successes and shortcomings prove that the demobilisation was not perfect. What was also proven was that as much as child demobilisation was a separate but simultaneous process to the adult process, it was heavily influenced by both the adult disarmament and to a lesser degree the adult demobilisation processes. Despite the list of shortcomings, the child demobilisation process was generally seen as successful in terms of delivering the necessary modules, assisting the child soldiers disassociate themselves from the fighting forces, reunify them with their families and prepare them for the reintegration process and their transition back into civilian life.

Conclusion

A total of 101,495 combatants, including 90,532 adults and 10,963 children went through the demobilisation process by its completion in December 2004.⁶³⁷ The number of children that participated in the demobilisation process was slightly more than the 8,000 originally planned for participants, but less than the 15,000 – 21,000 children thought to have been recruited and mobilised in the factions. Child demobilisation was also better integrated into the subsequent child reintegration process. Apart from the policy decisions, the fact that child protection agencies handling all the components increased the continuity of the demobilisation process with relation to both the disarmament and reintegration processes, and also improved the monitoring and oversight of the child components. Moreover, many of the reintegration programmes that eventually emerged were delivered by many of the same organisations that had established and managed the ICCs adding to the continuity of service.

The children's demobilisation consisted of 72 hours in separate facilities at the demobilisation sites, before being transferred to ICCs where they stayed between 4-12 weeks. At the ICCs they received the demobilisation modules while their families were traced. Although there were a few security problems, such as children rioting in ICC camps or some children leaving the camps prematurely, overall the children thought their time spent at the ICCs was positive and successful.⁶³⁸ The time spent at the ICCs was

⁶³⁶ Interview 90.

⁶³⁷ NCDDRR.

⁶³⁸ Interviews 23, 34, 55, 56, 76, 77, 92 and 95.

meant to make the former child soldiers gain a sense of self, belonging to their community and empower them to resolve conflicts through non-violent methods. This, in and of itself, impacted their social reintegration and their ability to benefit from further programmes delivered during the reintegration process.

Once the children arrived at the D2 sites, UNMIL was no longer responsible for their care. UNICEF and child protection agencies from that point were responsible for the children, for their basic needs and the various services that were provided to them. The guidelines and protocols that governed the child demobilisation process were developed with the best interests of the children at heart and in genuine partnership by the child protection agencies. UNICEF provided effective oversight over the whole demobilisation process, and acted expeditiously to overcome challenges that arose. These various factors enabled the demobilisation process to be a success despite the challenges at play. The success of the child demobilisation process was a promising start for the transition into the reintegration process.

The fact that the UNICEF and the child protection agencies were able to secure funding, separate from the UNDP Trust Fund, meant that they managed their own funds. Moreover, as the number of child soldiers who accessed the DDR process was under the original estimate, the funds were not depleted due to oversubscription in the same way the adult process was.

Despite undergoing counselling and modules in the ICCs, many children returned back to communities that had not changed since the conclusion of war. Many of these communities were unprepared for the return of children (and their adult counterparts); they remained stagnant with high levels of insecurity and stagnant formal and informal economies. Although socially the children were accepted, their return was not easy. While during the war, the social status of child soldiers was temporarily very good (due to the power they wielded as a result of their status as fighters), in the post-conflict environment traditional social structures re-emerged. There was a re-adjustment that needed to take place. This was made even more difficult due to the fact that some former child soldiers learned the power they possessed through protesting and rioting.

The disarmament and demobilisation processes have been criticised for not being linked to the reintegration process. The preparation, planning and policy decision-making was

very linear and had been done in isolation to the planning of the reintegration process. UNMIL was responsible for the DD component and UNDP for the RR further de-linked the process. Although this was the case with the adult process, the child process suffered slightly less from this problem, primarily because of the continuity of UNICEF's involvement and their integral role in all of the phases of the programme. However, although UNICEF was tasked with overseeing the child DDR process did not have policy decision-making power, which at times made them impotent. At crucial moments and decisions, such as the issue of cash TSA, their advice was not taken into account. Liberian national ownership over the DDR process and UNMIL's lack of child expertise as well as the stubbornness of UNMIL's senior management further compounded UNICEF's ability to impact policy decisions, protect children and ensure that admittance and participation of children in the process.

Did the child demobilisation process contribute to peacebuilding? Although many of the children did not immediately break the bond and influence of their commanders, the time spent at the ICCs allowed the children to socialise and experience an environment that was not dominated by violence, or drug use and exploitation. An integral part of the demobilisation process was the family-tracing component, which was extremely successful. A total of 98% of the children were reunited with their families and re-entered their communities. Moreover, during the demobilisation process children were effectively informed about their reintegration options. That is not to say that the demobilisation process was perfect, which it was not, but it provided the time and space for children to be taught life skills and receive counselling. Although the modules may have been superficial, they were certainly better than not receiving anything at all.

Chapter 7 – Reintegration in Liberia

Reintegration is the final and last stage of the DDR process and in many ways is more complex than the previous two phases. Unlike disarmament and demobilisation which are more contained, reintegration cannot be done in isolation and is very much dependent on the political, social, economic and developmental situation in the country. Its objectives as stated by the Strategic Framework are to provide the ex-combatants with the opportunity to learn basic skills to support themselves through employment, enable them to contribute towards the reconstruction process and to facilitate their acceptance into their communities.⁶³⁹ The child reintegration process has the added objective of protecting children against recruitment into fighting factions.⁶⁴⁰ Thus reintegration has both an economic and social component to it.⁶⁴¹ Both adult and child social reintegration started during the demobilisation process. For adults their social reintegration assistance was delivered while at the D2 sites. The social reintegration of children started while they were encamped at the ICCs, and continued even once they returned back to their communities.

Although formally the reintegration component commenced June 2004, four months before the completion of the DD phase (October 2004), the programme could not keep up with the number of ex-combatants participating in the DDR programme and the number of reintegration projects was limited. Reintegration started in earnest, reintegration projects and places, in early 2005 due to many of the issues that plagued the DD processes – including severe oversubscription, constrained budgets and slow project selection process. There were varying degrees of delays to both the adult and child reintegration processes.

⁶³⁹ Draft Interim Secretariat, 29.

⁶⁴⁰ Interview 76.

⁶⁴¹ Even though the official title of Liberia's Disarmament, Demobilisation, **Rehabilitation** and Reintegration Programme, included rehabilitation, this component was never defined nor was it made operational. Rehabilitation only existed in name.

A total of 103,019 adults and children were disarmed and a total of 101,495, ex-combatants, including 10,963 children had been formally demobilised. These latter figures constituted the eligible caseload for the reintegration programme.⁶⁴² Originally the reintegration process was to be completed in three years, taking it through October 2007. This timeframe was but was extended until October 2008 in order to compensate for the slow commencement and large caseload.⁶⁴³ The final reintegration project was completed in July 2009, which marked the formal conclusion of the DDR programme.⁶⁴⁴ Like the DD processes, the reintegration process was fraught with challenges, many of which were ultimately overcome. Some of which were not.

While UNMIL had the ultimate responsibility over the DD stages, the reintegration process was the main responsibility of UNDP. This is due to the fact that disarmament and components of demobilisation are commonly seen as militaristic, while reintegration is seen as a developmental or socio-economic component. Unlike UNMIL, UNDP and the other UN agencies had a presence in Liberia before the conflict and would be there for the long-term well after the peacekeepers withdrew. UNDP established a DDR Trust Fund and was responsible for its management. The Trust Fund was meant to fund the majority of the reintegration process.⁶⁴⁵ Like the previous DD processes UNICEF was entrusted with the responsibility for the child reintegration process due to their expertise and experience.⁶⁴⁶

Context

Keeping in mind the complexity of peacebuilding it is important to note the other numerous complementary initiatives that were underway during the reintegration process in the country. During 2004 and 2008, the United Nations was responsible for the security in West African sub-region. UN peacekeepers had a presence in Sierra Leone (although the mission there was winding down) and a growing presence in Cote d'Ivoire. This was

⁶⁴² United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III " (Monrovia: UNDP, 2005), 29.

⁶⁴³ Government of Liberia, *Executive Order No8: Extending the Mandate of the NCDDRR to Complete the RR Component of the DDRR Program* 12 April 2007.

⁶⁴⁴ United Nations, "Nineteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (10 August 2009), 4.

⁶⁴⁵ Interview 52.

⁶⁴⁶ The majority of child ex-combatants went through UNICEF supported reintegration programmes. These are the programmes that I mainly focus on, as information about the donor sponsored programmes was not readily available.

significant because between Liberia's two neighbours one was emerging from an armed conflict and the other was embroiled in one. The security situation in Liberia had notably improved largely due to the deployment of UNMIL peacekeepers and the DDR programme.

Having been one of the main focuses of the country and of the UN, the DD process was winding down as the reintegration process began. Liberia's DDR programme was designed and implemented in a very linear fashion. As we saw in earlier chapters, the number of combatants that accessed the DDR programme almost tripled original estimates stretching resources, both human and financial, and forced the programme to be extended.

Domestic politics were exceedingly a source of insecurity. By mid 2005 the NTGL had not accomplished much in terms of strengthening its authority and was frustrating the both the UN and the donors in addition to ordinary Liberians. There were frequent and substantial allegations of corruption and the NTGL's term as dictated by the Accra Peace Agreement was quickly expiring. Meanwhile the country was preparing itself for the first post-conflict elections, slated to be multi-party, free and fair and yield a representative government. Towards the end of 2004, the election campaign was receiving the attention that the DDR previously benefited from and eclipsed the attention the reintegration received. The whole country and foreign stakeholders (UN, IFIs, donors, etc.) were focussed on making the election and democratic transition a success. After a successful election and run-off poll, on 16 January 2006, Liberia inaugurated Africa's first female president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

After the inauguration, the political momentum quickly turned to establishing a new administration and setting its political, economic and social priorities. Although DDR and reconciliation were seen as top priorities, there were many competing priorities such as the rehabilitation of the economy, improving rule of law, improving security, and re-establishing good foreign relations.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, given Liberia's political, economic, developmental and social deficits over the years there was no shortage of priorities. Although very much in full-swing by the end of 2006 the reintegration process had dropped to the very back of people's minds and national consciousness was overtaken by other priorities. As the economy grew (not necessarily improving employment) and reforms were implemented and took effect, government improved its ability to capture

⁶⁴⁷ Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, *Inaugural Address* 16 January 2006.

domestic revenues. President Johnson-Sirleaf was successful in negotiated substantial debt relief and attracting increased foreign direct investment. Liberia was seen as more and more stable and started being referred to as a peacekeeping and peacebuilding ‘success story’ by the UN and main stakeholders. This was the backdrop to which reintegration took place.

The Adult Reintegration Process

The governance structure of the reintegration component was identical to that of the DD in spite of UNDP being responsible for that phase. The technical committee (TCC) provided technical advice and had a prominent role. The programme approval process through the PAC did not change. As originally designed donors funded reintegration mainly through the UNDP Trust Fund, but also bilaterally through parallel programmes. This governance structure was carefully designed to contribute to the effectiveness of the programme as well as ensure consistency of the projects in the different phases, oversight of both standards; encouraging lessons were learnt and applied. Mainstreaming the programme selection and monitoring of programmes was intended to preventing ex-combatants from ‘double-dipping’ or enrolling in more than one reintegration project. Moreover, a Reintegration Working Group was established to oversee, monitor and adjust the programme in real-time. The Working Group met regularly to address issues and concerns that arose.

The reintegration programme, like the previous DD phases, relied entirely upon service providers for the implementation of reintegration activities and programmes. The burden for the development of reintegration projects rested with the service providers themselves, not with UNDP, UNICEF or UNMIL. UNDP invited project proposals from service providers for funding through a tender-process managed by the PAC.⁶⁴⁸ This meant that service providers were responsible for developing projects, and then had to raise funding from either the UNDP Trust Fund or alternative sources to implement the projects. However regardless of the source of funding, all reintegration programmes still had to go through the TCC and PAC process to ensure consistency. Given the limited capacity of service providers in Liberia this process of identifying and developing reintegration projects was of great concern to many as there was a shortage of both good reintegration projects and a dearth of capable implementing partners.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁸ Paes: 259.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

The oversubscription of the DD processes had a significant impact on reintegration regarding funding constraints, project design and implementation, but also confidence that the reintegration approach was the right one. The adult reintegration process was designed to specifically target ex-combatants rather than for the explicit benefit of the community at large. Due to the funding constraints and questions about the credibility of the programme, donors considered shifting the emphasis away from targeting ex-combatants with assistance, instead focussing on community-based support for the war-affected population.⁶⁵⁰ Although this shift of focus did not happen, several funders (namely USAID and the European Commission) decided to develop and fund projects directly, in addition to their support of the UNDP Trust Fund. These donor-supported projects were called 'parallel programmes' and they helped lower the burden or caseload of ex-combatants directly supported by the Trust Fund. These programmes were developed in direct response to the inflated number of DDR participants and some included not only ex-combatants, but war-affected people.

As noted in earlier chapters, the increase in the caseload of combatants had financial implications. The original budget for an estimated 38,000 combatants was \$55 million. This was later revised to \$71.3 million for the caseload of 101,495 ex-combatants.⁶⁵¹ This meant that the DDR programme required not only a greater level of financial investment but also to lower the per capita costs. The original reintegration budget was calculated on a \$950 per capita cost, due to the increased caseload and this was revised to an average of \$800 per capita.⁶⁵²

Although UNMIL was supposed to cover all military-related DD costs through their budget, including the cost of contracting service providers, due to the large number of participants and constraints within UNMIL, UNDP took a lead in the contracting service providers.⁶⁵³ Despite this not being their responsibility, UNDP through the Trust Fund paid implementing partners a total of \$12 million for services rendered in the DD phases. The expectation was that the Trust Fund would be reimbursed this amount by UNMIL. So

⁶⁵⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Briefs: No 3 Reintegration Strategies - an Overview of the Implications of Non-Targeted Assistance for Demobilised Ex-Combatants," (Monrovia: UNDP, 1 March 2005).

⁶⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 13.

⁶⁵² United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", Section 4.10.1.

⁶⁵³ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 33-4.

not only were there nearly triple the amount of combatants in the DDR programme, but \$12 million had been depleted from the Trust Fund before reintegration even began. By the end of 2005, UNMIL still had not reimbursed the UNDP Trust Fund.⁶⁵⁴ Until the revised budget was approved and the funds disbursed there was a significant funding shortfall for the reintegration phase.

Options for Reintegrating Adults

In the absence of a comprehensive market survey, Liberia's 1997 DDR process, other regional DDR experiences (namely Sierra Leone's) and the information gathered from the ex-combatants during the DD process proved invaluable in informing reintegration options and projects.⁶⁵⁵ The reintegration options were based on previous reintegration preferences (from 1997 surveys). As a result, UNDP boasted that the reintegration options were demand driven and represented what the ex-combatants themselves wanted to pursue.⁶⁵⁶ The ex-combatants had the opportunity to choose their preferred reintegration option and location.

The economic reintegration priorities and programmatic options included formal education, vocational training, agricultural assistance and public works projects. During the DD phase, the ex-combatants indicated their preference for reintegration programmes – vocational training (50%), formal education (42%), agriculture (4%), small enterprise development (3%) and public works (1%).⁶⁵⁷ Each ex-combatant had the option to enrol him or herself into one reintegration project. Social reintegration assistance was meant to be incorporated into each of the reintegration project, but in reality this did not materialise. Below is a description of the reintegration options made available.

Education

Formal education was identified as a main reintegration priority. The justification for this was simple. The education level of ex-combatants was very low due to the country's protracted war and the collapsed education system. According to information gathered during the DD phases, 81% of ex-combatants indicated that they were in school before joining the fighting factions and despite this the level of education was very low (see

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Briefs: No 3."

⁶⁵⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 39.

⁶⁵⁷ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 55.

charts).⁶⁵⁸ It was believed that educating ex-combatants would help them be more competitive in the job market and help them both find gainful employment as well as assist them integrate into their communities.

Self-reported education levels of ex-combatants

Education Level			
	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
None	9.3%	7.3%	16.6%
Pre Kindergarten	0.8%	0.3%	1.1%
Elementary	28.2%	9.2%	37.4%
Junior High	20.8%	3.5%	24.3%
Senior High	14.5%	1.3%	15.8%
Technical College	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
University	0.9%	0.1%	1.0%
Professional School	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
N/A	2.1%	1.2%	3.3%
Total	77.1%	22.9%	100%

Source: NCDDRR. "DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2, & 3." Monrovia: NCDDRR, 16 January 2005.

The assistance package of the formal education option was straightforward. Ex-combatants would receive free education for three years. Their registration tuition fees, books and study materials, uniform and examination fees would all be covered as part of their reintegration benefits. Moreover, they would receive a monthly subsistence allowance – amounting to \$30 per month for the first year (for 9 academic calendar months), \$15 per month the second year (for 9 academic calendar months), and no cash allowance the third year.⁶⁵⁹ These benefits were dependent on several factors: (1) although the ex-combatants could the school they wanted to attend, they must meet the minimum requires for admission independent of the JIU or reintegration programme; (2) subsistence support is dependent upon a 75% attendance rate that would be monitored regularly throughout the programme; and (3) that the school is accredited by the Ministry of Education and enter into a contract with the JIU/UNDP.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁸ NCDDRR.

⁶⁵⁹ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 56. and United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Briefs: Justification for Providing Reintegration Subsistence Allowance for Ex-Combatants," (Monrovia: UNDP, 26 January 2005).

⁶⁶⁰ For the full procedures for placement into formal education see United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Briefs: No 2 Formal Education Support," (Monrovia: UNDP, 25 February 2005).

Vocational Training

Recognising that formal education was not for everyone, a vocational training option was offered. For those that wanted to acquire immediate skills, they were offered training and in some cases apprenticeships in the following fields: auto mechanics, carpentry, electronics, general mechanics, masonry, plumbing, refrigeration and air-conditioning, welding and fabrication, arts and crafts, tailoring, hairdressing, shoe making, tie dye and painting/decorating (pastry making and cosmetology were initially offered but were discontinued).⁶⁶¹ The justification for providing vocational training was to provide the ex-combatants, many of who did not have skills, with the opportunity to learn or enhance skills that would increase their employability. It was thought that this would increase their economic security as hence their social reintegration.

The training was intended to provide the beneficiaries with hands-on training. The service providers would be equipped with the necessary tools and hardware (such as tools or sewing machines) for the trainees to learn on. In addition to the vocational training, each project would include basic literacy and numeracy and business skills development training. Where possible the trainees would be paired up as an apprentice with a master craftsman to continue their learning and enable them to build a client base. The ex-combatants that selected this option were given a monthly subsistence allowance of \$30 per month for a maximum of eight months.⁶⁶²

Agriculture

Like in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture is the bedrock of economic life in Liberia. In 2003 it was estimated that '80% of total employment in subsistence agriculture, contributing to about 33% of GDP.'⁶⁶³ Although agricultural assistance would take a minimum of a harvest to yield results, it was the best option for becoming self-sufficient. Agriculture training was a better prospect than the other reintegration options in terms of income generation and contributing to not only the national recovery, but also food security. Getting rural communities to be self-sufficient in food production was an important goal of the overall development and reconstruction of Liberia and there was an

⁶⁶¹ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 24-25 and 68-98.

⁶⁶² United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Briefs: Justification for Providing Reintegration Subsistence Allowance for Ex-Combatants."

⁶⁶³ International Labour Office and UNICEF, "Labour Market and Training Needs Assessment: Mapping of Reintegration Opportunities for Children Associated with Fighting Forces," (Monrovia, Liberia: March 2005), 6.

opportunity for ex-combatants to play a role in this recovery. Moreover, agricultural assistance would help the urban-rural balance of reintegration projects, which was also an intended goal of the reintegration programme. That being said, although agricultural assistance was the third most desired reintegration option, only 4% sought to access this option.

Beneficiaries of this option were provided with practical training, including how to clear swamp land, how to select different seed varieties, use fertiliser and pesticides effectively, how to establish and manage nurseries, and crop cultivation.⁶⁶⁴ The beneficiaries received a monthly stipend of \$30 for a maximum of eight months and upon completion of the programme each trainee was given a set of tools, seeds or seedlings and in some cases the use of land to start their operations.⁶⁶⁵

Public Works

Recognizing that there would be a lag between the DD processes and the start of most reintegration programmes a public works option was presented as a stopgap measure. For those ex-combatants who felt the immediate need to earn an income the Liberia Community Infrastructure Programme (LCIP) was made available as a reintegration option. This programme among other things focused on the rehabilitation of infrastructure including roads, schools, government buildings and health clinics.⁶⁶⁶ The idea was that ex-combatants could be used to improve the dilapidated condition of infrastructure to the benefit of the community. In addition to being feed, the beneficiaries were paid for their labour at the rate of \$2 per day. This was the only job creation intervention of the reintegration programme. USAID funded this option, which was seen as *parallel* option.

Social Reintegration

Each of the reintegration options was meant to have a social integration component included in the project design. Initially the emphasis was placed on the economic reintegration component, although one of the lessons learnt through the monitoring and evaluation process was that more attention needed to be paid to the social reintegration

⁶⁶⁴ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", section 4.12.2.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ USAID, *The Liberia Community Infrastructure Programme (LCIP)* (10 September 2008), 8.

component.⁶⁶⁷ Although PAC approved projects were meant to ensure the inclusion of social reintegration components in all approved projects, the implementation was sketchy at best, despite an attempt to streamline and identify means to address social reintegration.⁶⁶⁸ The social component included lessons on ‘conflict, violence, forgiveness, culture, communication skills, peace education, reconciliation and civic education...[and] HIV awareness.’⁶⁶⁹

Analysing the Adult Reintegration Process

It is undeniable that the DDR programme was under a great deal of political pressure – both internationally and domestically.⁶⁷⁰ Despite the myriad of challenges the timelines were aggressive, the expectations were ambitious and there was a sense that failure would simply not be tolerated. Although a lag between the completion of the DD phase and the commencement of reintegration was expected, which was one of the justifications for giving cash TSAs, for many ex-combatants the delay was longer than anticipated.

There were several key factors that negatively impacted the adult reintegration process. Funding was a constant problem, not only regarding the increased budget but also fulfilment and timely disbursement of pledges. The reintegration project selection process was problematic. The availability of qualified implementing partners and training expertise was limited. Administrative arrangements were cumbersome and at times inefficient. The establishment of NCDDRR Field Offices were severely delayed. The information campaign beyond Monrovia was also severely delayed.⁶⁷¹ All these issues will be covered in greater detail.

Funding issues

As is often the case with humanitarian, peacebuilding and/or post-conflict situations there is gap between international financial pledges and what is actually delivered. In Liberia, pledges for the DDR Trust Fund suffered from this affliction and a delay in disbursement. The necessary funding for reintegration was not forthcoming immediately from the donors. Moreover, the situation was not helped by the inflation of participants, which in

⁶⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 28, 51.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁷⁰ Interview 90.

⁶⁷¹ Interviews 57 and 90.

the eyes of the donors damaged the credibility of the DDR programme making them reluctant to provide support. The Trust Fund was plagued with funding shortages for almost the duration of the DDR programme. This impacted reintegration programmes, delaying project approvals, and delaying the projects even once they have started due to the inability to complete funding commitments. In July 2005 when reintegration was meant to be in full swing the Trust Fund had a shortfall of almost \$40 million.⁶⁷² Although this gap had shrunk to \$5 million by November 2005 the damage had been done and the reintegration programmes had been significantly delayed. Although the Trust Fund was fully funded in the end, the delays and shortage of funding caused a domino effect negatively impacting the programme.⁶⁷³ This was a direct consequence of the donors.

Although not originally planned, the reintegration process was also implemented in phases. Phase I, June 2004 through June 2005, and provided assistance to 45,000 ex-combatants through the UNDP Trust Fund.⁶⁷⁴ Phase II which started in July 2005 provided an additional 35,000 beneficiaries.⁶⁷⁵ There were bilateral reintegration programmes for approximately 21,440 ex-combatants that ran concurrently. The final phase of the reintegration programme was launched in January 2008 to cover the residual caseload of 9,000 ex-combatants and the DDR programme formally was completed in July 2009.⁶⁷⁶

Reintegration Project Selection Process

Several service providers complained that the approval process was too lengthy and cumbersome.⁶⁷⁷ Just like during the DD phase, after the TCC advised on the reintegration projects proposals they went to the PAC for approval. During the DD phase, in 2004, the PAC met nine times in total and the first reintegration project was approved on 19 May 2004.⁶⁷⁸ In 2005, the PAC approval process markedly slowed down. UNDP took the point of view that there was more time to consider the suitability, performance and capabilities of NGO partners. Also given the gap in the Trust Fund there was reluctance to approve

⁶⁷² United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 25.

⁶⁷³ Interview 71.

⁶⁷⁴ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 36.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ United Nations, "Nineteenth Progress Report ", 4.

⁶⁷⁷ Interview 52.

⁶⁷⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 25.

projects without the means to pay for them.⁶⁷⁹ As of June 2007, 62,000 had received reintegration assistance supported by the Trust Fund and 31,000 ex-combatants went through the parallel programmes.⁶⁸⁰ The residual caseload enrolled in the last phase of the reintegration programme which was launched in December 2008.⁶⁸¹

The Availability of Capable Service Providers and Expertise

Like during the DD phases NGOs, service providers and child protection agencies were responsible for conceiving and developing projects for the reintegration phase. Funding for those projects also had to be sought. Rather than developing and implementing reintegration projects themselves UNDP invited the submission of projects for funding through its Trust Fund. UNDP and ultimately the reintegration programme 'depended therefore on the interest and ability of third parties in designing and running these programmes.'⁶⁸² The impact of Liberia's conflict was well known and was no surprise that there were very few qualified organisations that could deliver the necessary and sufficient reintegration programmes. This challenge proved to be a serious constraint in developing projects that were capable of absorbing the quantity of combatants necessary. This unavailability of reintegration service providers and expertise was a major factor in delaying the reintegration process and impacted quality, quantity and speed at which programmes were rolled out.

Directly linked to the availability of service providers, the geographic distribution of projects beyond Monrovia was also a major challenge. There was a concentration in programmes in and around Monrovia despite only 40% of ex-combatants preferring to resettle in Montserrado County (Monrovia).⁶⁸³ Due to the limitations of services provider and the urban-bias, the reintegration programmes took a while to be rolled out beyond Monrovia.⁶⁸⁴

UNDP has been criticised for not effectively planning for reintegration or having a more active role in developing and/or implementing viable projects given the importance of the

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Assistance to Liberia DDDR Programme Residual Caseload," (Monrovia: UNDP, April 2009), 5.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁸² Paes: 259.

⁶⁸³ NCDDRR.

⁶⁸⁴ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 57.

reintegration process, the large caseload and the dearth of capable service providers.⁶⁸⁵ Had reintegration been properly planned, in sync with the DD phases rather than separate from it, there might have been enough time to assist in either building the local capacity to deliver better programmes or bring in specialised people to develop and implement projects. This was an oversight that should have been addressed early on, possible even before the DDR programme commenced.

Cumbersome Administrative Arrangements

Once reintegration projects were approved, service providers needed to be formally contracted by UNDP. Despite UNDP being ultimately responsible for the reintegration programme, the implementing partners were responsible for financial management of their project, the training of their staff and ensuring a certain level of quality. During the DD phases there was a sense of urgency, which often trumped administration arrangements and other blockages.⁶⁸⁶ That same sense of urgency was not present during the reintegration phase.⁶⁸⁷ During the reintegration phase, UNDP wanted to ensure the capacity of the service providers to deliver on their commitments, both programmatic and administratively. This often delayed the contracting of implementing partners.

Developing suitable projects, identifying and verifying the implement partners all took time. The contracts then needed to be arranged and terms agreed upon. Administrative arrangements with schools, for the formal education component, were particularly burdensome.⁶⁸⁸ In most countries the identification of schools would be a straightforward process, but in Liberia this was a complicated matter. Many of the schools had forged their accreditation or were no longer in contact with the Ministry of Education. Therefore the school's accreditation needed to be verified with the Ministry of Education on a case-to-case basis. Then the ex-combatants needed to apply for admission on their own merit, and the list of eligible students would then forwarded to the JIU for further validation and verification. Next, the schools would be assessed to ensure their capability to deliver the curriculum. Only then, if all was satisfactory, would the schools be paid the initial tuition payment and the subsistence allowance for the validated students (which would then be

⁶⁸⁵ Paes: 259.

⁶⁸⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 26.

⁶⁸⁷ An audit of the DD service providers concluded that almost all partners had not complied with the regulations set out in their agreements with UNDP and the PAC. For more information see Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Interview 74.

disbursed to them). Subsequent payments would depend on monitoring of the student's attendance and performance.⁶⁸⁹

Supported by the Trust Fund, the formal education programme began in September 2004 and was available for 12,000 ex-combatants for the 2004/5 academic year. An additional 9,000 ex-combatants were added to the programme for the 2005/6 academic year bringing the total of UNDP Trust Fund supported ex-combatants to 21,000.⁶⁹⁰ By the end of the 2005/6 academic year a total of 345 academic schools and 23 computer schools were participating in the programme.⁶⁹¹

The disbursement of subsistence allowances did not always get paid on time. These delays often resulted in the ex-combatants rioting and causing disturbances. Regardless of whose fault it was, whether the JIU had not done the necessary verification in order to authorise payment or the problem arose from an operational glitch, when the ex-combatants were not promptly paid they would descend on the JIU/NCDDRR headquarters in Monrovia. If the riots got out of hand UNMIL peacekeepers would be deployed while JIU/NCDDRR staff dealt with the ex-combatants' concerns. The JIU/NCDDRR got adept at handling the situations, which were normally diffused by promises to look into the delay and rectify the error if one had been made.⁶⁹² These errors and operational glitches regularly created flashpoints and temporary moments of insecurity.

The Establishment of NCDDRR Field Offices

The NCDDRR was meant to open Field Offices in 2004 to help inform and counsel ex-combatants of their benefits and the various programmes available to them. These Field Offices were intended to monitor reintegration services, track ex-combatants, and facilitate reintegration activities in their areas. Similar to the DD phase and the delayed roll-out of reintegration programmes, Monrovia was the first to benefit from this facility. The first Referral and Counselling Office opened in May 2005.⁶⁹³ The Gbarnga, Buchanan and Zwedru branches opened and became operational in June 2005.⁶⁹⁴ By the end of early

⁶⁸⁹ Interview 23 and United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 55-56.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Interview 23.

⁶⁹³ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 17.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

January 2006 the Harper and Voinjama offices were still being renovated and not yet operational.⁶⁹⁵ This meant that it was difficult for ex-combatants outside Monrovia to seek information about their benefits or what programmes existed. This was the case until these field offices were opened. This lack of information and a presence beyond Monrovia negatively impacted the monitoring and counselling of ex-combatants and identification of reintegration opportunities. In many parts of the country this lack of information unfortunately also corresponded with a lack of available programmes for ex-combatants to enrol in. This delay was avoidable, and with proper planning and training, the deployment of NCDDRR field staff could have been happened much earlier. Overall, ex-combatants could have and should have been kept better informed.⁶⁹⁶

The Information and Communication Campaign

Like with the DD phases, the reintegration process required a comprehensive nationwide information and sensitisation campaign to inform ex-combatants and communities of the composition of reintegration benefits, available programmes and the objectives of the reintegration programme. This was not only necessary for the flow of accurate information, but also necessary to contribute to expectation management given the high expectations ex-combatants had. The JIU Information and Sensitisation Unit (ISU) managed this process with support and input from the key stakeholders including UNDP, UNMIL, and child protection agencies. The campaign used radio, television, print, press releases, signboards, billboards and town hall meetings to deliver the information and various messages.⁶⁹⁷ Although the objectives, benefits and options of reintegration programme could be discussed, the lack of available projects was a challenge for the campaign. The JIU could not inform ex-combatants on the specific projects, because in most cases the projects had not yet been approved or even identified. That was part of the domino effect of the funding shortage and unavailability of capable service providers. Those in Monrovia were decently informed about their reintegration benefits because of the proximity to the JIU and NCDDRR headquarters, but the same was not true about the hinterland. From 23 May until 25 October 2005 a team comprised of JIU-ISU, UNDP, UNMIL and NCDDRR started a countrywide information road-show that visited 26 towns in 13 counties to

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Interview 84.

⁶⁹⁷ Interviews 23, 37 and United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II", 99-100.

inform ex-combatants on the process.⁶⁹⁸ Until this campaign 'Monrovia was the hub or source of all information about the RR and related activities.'⁶⁹⁹ Although the information campaign started relatively late and well after the reintegration process had commenced, it did play an integral role in informing the ex-combatants of their benefits, facilitating their enrolment in programmes.

Although most of these interrelated issues were resolved with time, the role-out of and the absorption of ex-combatants into reintegration programmes was slow. Ex-combatants had high expectations, which in most cases were not fulfilled initially.⁷⁰⁰ Moreover, serious concerns were raised in terms of the quality of services and education that were provided to the ex-combatants. With regard to vocational training, there was no standardization of programmes or training, meaning quality control was in the hands of the implementing partners. This was surprising given the reservations key stakeholders had from the start and throughout the DDR programme. With regard to the formal education component, the Liberian curriculum had not been revised in over fifteen years and the teachers were of varying quality.⁷⁰¹ There was the impression that the reintegration process, like DD, was more about outputs (i.e., having the bulk share of the ex-combatants access their reintegration benefits) rather than the outcome or having a positive impact.⁷⁰² Moreover, the ex-combatants were being trained for jobs that simply did not exist.⁷⁰³ Moreover, it was unclear as to whether the vocational training or schooling would increase their employability in the short-, medium- or long-term.

The Child Reintegration Process

A total of 10,963 children were demobilised and were eligible for reintegration benefits. A memorandum of understanding was signed between UNDP and UNICEF tasking UNICEF with the responsibility of the child reintegration programme. Just as in the DD phases, UNICEF played an integral role in the design, implementation and monitoring of the child reintegration process. Unlike the adult process, the child reintegration programme

⁶⁹⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "Bringing RR to the People," (Monrovia: UNDP, November 2005), 1.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Interviews 46, 47, 50, 61 and 63..

⁷⁰¹ Interview 69.

⁷⁰² Interview 82.

⁷⁰³ Morten Boås, *DDRed in Liberia: Youth Remarginalisation or Reintegration?* (Brighton: MICROCON, 2010), 3.

was directly linked to the demobilisation phase and the programme provided a certain level of continuity for the participants. The time children spent at the ICCs was the beginning of their rehabilitation and reintegration. In fact the bulk of the activities at the ICCs such as the counselling, life skills training, the basic literacy and numeracy lessons, and recreational activities were all geared to mend, teach and re-socialise the child ex-combatants. The child reintegration process, like the DD phases, was a truly collaborative endeavour bringing together efforts of UNICEF, child protection agencies, Liberia's ministry of education, UNDP, donors and local communities.

Unlike the adult process, in preparation to the reintegration process UNICEF commissioned the International Labour Organisation to conduct a labour market survey and training needs assessment for children.⁷⁰⁴ Although this assessment was published in March 2005 (well after the 'official' start of the reintegration programme), it helped not only inform the child reintegration process, but also indirectly assisted the adult process by providing a real-time snapshot of Liberia's economic viability and that of ex-combatants.⁷⁰⁵ The survey did a very thorough job of illustrating the dire state of the economy, as well as the situation facing Liberia's children. The survey not only assessed the reintegration prospects and options, but also provided recommendations on how best to maximise the impact of reintegration.

It was no surprise that Liberia's economic situation was in shambles. The survey noted that only 55% of males and 40.6% of females were economically active, and that the 80% figure of unemployment may indeed be higher once underemployment was factored in.⁷⁰⁶ It showed that the formal economy was relatively small, while the informal economy was where the majority of Liberian worked.

The market survey claims that the previous failures of the reintegration in Liberia were due to: (1) the inability of the vocational training system to provide marketable and non-diversified skills; (2) poor quality of training programs; (3) the lack of follow-up assistance to the trainees; (4) the harsh competition in the labour market; (5) the inadequate length of training; and (6) the overall poor economic opportunities that existed in Liberia.⁷⁰⁷ In 1997 many of the ex-combatants were not absorbed into the economy, nor did the reintegration

⁷⁰⁴ International Labour Office and UNICEF.

⁷⁰⁵ Interview 69.

⁷⁰⁶ International Labour Office and UNICEF, viii.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., 10.

programmes leave the participants with employable skills.⁷⁰⁸ In explicitly naming these failures, the survey was attempting to prevent the same mistakes from being repeated in the 2004 reintegration attempt.

UNICEF and ILO's assessment of the absorption capacity of child ex-combatants into the labour market was bleak. Apart from the economy being in shambles, the labour market was a highly competitive place and given the prolonged conflict and the severe damage suffered by the educational infrastructure the vast majority of children could not read or write and had very few skills.⁷⁰⁹ The lack of local capacity to provide skills training was of particular concern. The reality that child ex-combatants would be competing with their adult counterparts, a large population of returning refugees and displaced people many of whom were better qualified did not provide reason for optimism.⁷¹⁰ For these reasons, it was recommended that child ex-combatants receive opportunities of education in order to help make them more competitive and that the reintegration programme should focus on 'diversification of skills development.'⁷¹¹

Options for Reintegrating Children

The priorities and options for child reintegration were very similar to adults. For many of the same reasons formal education and vocational training were prioritised. Children over the age of 14 years old had the choice of which reintegration option to pursue. It was recommended to younger children that they pursue the formal education option. Although the options for children were very similar to the adult programme there were some notable differences to the approaches as well as the benefit they received.

One notable difference was that unlike their adult counterparts, children were not offered monthly subsistence allowances. Following the same logic as with the TSA issue, UNICEF did not think it wise or suitable to give children cash support as part of their reintegration package. Instead UNICEF took a community-based approach where possible. They provided "in kind" assistance targeting their efforts to the benefit of the wider community rather than just the individual child ex-combatants. They believed this approach helped diminish stigma that ex-combatants would endure but also help diminish the perception of rewarding the child ex-combatants.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 22-3.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., 28-9.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 22-3.

Like the previous stages of the DDR programme child reintegration relied on various sources of funding, including bilateral funding, resources from the UNDP Trust Fund and UNICEF's own core funding.⁷¹² Also wherever possible, UNICEF integrated and used their wider reconstruction interventions to complement their reintegration efforts.

Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP)

Demobilised children had the option to access free basic primary education (up to 6th grade) for three years through the Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP).⁷¹³ Education was seen as vital due to the reality that few child ex-combatants would have received much education during the war. However UNICEF took a slightly different approach to the formal education option for children than UNDP/JIU/NCDDRR did with adults.

Although the reintegration benefits did specifically target the child ex-combatants in terms of enabling them to go to school for free, the programme was designed to extend benefits to the schools and communities as much as possible. In return for schools waiving the tuition and examination fees of child ex-combatants UNICEF provided the participating schools with education and recreational kits for the use of the whole school. These kits included educational and recreational material, such as books, notebooks, chalk, sporting equipment, and board games.⁷¹⁴ Also as part of the benefit package school administrators, principals, teachers, social workers as well as members of the communities received training on how to handle traumatised children. The reintegration package and training was ultimately aimed at supporting the ultimate goal for the children's reintegration supporting the community's ability to more effectively interact and deal with former child soldiers, contributing to their learning and reintegration. The programme was explicitly designed to benefit government (ministries of education and youth), schools (both public and private), teachers, principals, and all pupils, including the child ex-combatants in participating schools.⁷¹⁵ As a result of this initiative, 3,363 teachers, 479 school principles, 54 district education officers and 11 county education officers received psychosocial care training.⁷¹⁶

⁷¹² Interviews 69 and 76.

⁷¹³ UNICEF, "Reintegration Options for CAFF," (Monrovia, Liberia).

⁷¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 60.

⁷¹⁵ Interviews 69 and 76.

⁷¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 60.

Skills Training and Apprenticeship

Similar to adults, formal education was not suitable for every child. A very similar skills training and apprenticeship programme was designed suitable for children older than 14 years old. This option provided the opportunity to acquire hands-on training in areas that could possibly assist them find gainful employment and provide skills that may lead to economic self-sufficiency. The areas covered in the training were similar to those of adults, such as carpentry, plumbing, electronics, tie-dye, auto mechanics, and masonry. Areas deemed as either inappropriate or dangerous for children, such as rubber tapping or bricklaying, were not made available.⁷¹⁷

To supplement their skills training, the children would also participate in basic literacy, numeracy and small business management skills lessons to support their ability to function in the business environment.⁷¹⁸ Given the reality that few children could read and write this component was seen as essential to their successful engagement with the private sector.

Children that opted for this option received one meal per day during their training programme. In lieu of receiving a monthly subsistence allowance, after successfully completing the training children received a tool kit and where applicable a small business grant to help them start their business.⁷¹⁹ Where possible the trainees were placed as apprentices working under the guidance and supervision of masters of their trade. This was intended to assist the children to continue learning their trade whilst possibly earning an income. Children above the age of 14 years old were targeted for this option, while younger children were encouraged to select the education option.⁷²⁰

Social Reintegration Component

Family tracing was one of the main components of the demobilisation and social reintegration of children. As discussed in the demobilisation chapter, family tracing began at the ICCs and enabled the placement of the children back into the families and local communities. This was a crucial step that enabled the return of children back into their communities.

⁷¹⁷ International Labour Office and UNICEF, 72.

⁷¹⁸ UNICEF, "Reintegration Options for CAFF."

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Interviews 23 and 69.

It was not uncommon for the behaviour of child ex-combatants to be aggressive, disruptive and unpleasant. In many cases schools, families and communities did not know how to respond to this. As a response, the social reintegration component was designed to address these challenges aimed to contribute to the successful reintegration at both an individual and community level. Community child welfare mechanisms were established to assist with this – namely Child Welfare Committees (CWC) and Children’s and Youth Clubs. The Child Welfare Committees were community-based mechanisms created to monitor the welfare of children and institutionalise child protection throughout the country.⁷²¹ Children’s and Youth Clubs were created to provide a forum for child and youth activities, whether recreational or educational. Both CWCs and Children’s Clubs were intended for both ex-combatants and members of their communities.⁷²² In addition to facilitating the social reintegration of children, NGO staff, social workers, teachers, principles, community leaders and other interested parties received training from UNICEF and child protection agencies on how to deal with traumatised children in order to both help them integration and improve the community’s ability to cope and deal with them.⁷²³ This was similar and complementary to the training provided for CEIP. Together, these social reintegration interventions were integral of both the education and vocational training of the child reintegration programme.

Like during DD, child protection agencies, led by UNICEF, played a big role in the service delivery as well as the capacity building for both the education and training components. UNICEF worked very closely with the ministry of education to rehabilitate schools, train teachers, update and standardise the curriculum, ensure schools were supplied with necessary infrastructure (for example latrines and desks) and teaching materials (for example chalk boards and chalk).⁷²⁴ This was done as part of UNICEF’s contribution to Liberia’s national recovery. Local child protection agencies were relied heavily upon to provide a repository of expertise, to monitor and provide real-time reports on child protection issues. Local child protection agencies throughout Liberia helped set up and maintain the CWCs and Child Clubs. This national wide coverage of child protection agencies and their intense collaboration was an integral part of the social reintegration component for children.

⁷²¹ Interview 69.

⁷²² Interview 69.

⁷²³ Interview 69.

⁷²⁴ Interview 69.

Information Campaign

Together with the child protection agencies, UNICEF, the JIU and the ministry of education embarked on a widespread information campaign to inform communities, schools, administrators and child ex-combatants of the reintegration benefits and process. This information campaign started while some of the children were at the ICCs, which obviously contributed to informing children. The countrywide reach of the child protection agencies, their access and frequent contact with a large number of communities was integral to the flow of information regarding the child reintegration programme, complementing the information campaign for adults.

Analysing the Child Reintegration Process

UNICEF support for the CEIP programme was intended to cover a total of 5,000 child ex-combatants and provide them with a primary school education. In total 85% of this target was reached with a total of 4,295 children, 3,295 male and 1,000 female, opting for this reintegration option. After long negotiations with the schools, a total of 383 were supported during the 2004-5 academic year.⁷²⁵ UNICEF trained a total of teachers 3,363 and 479 principals in child protection and how to deal with traumatised children.⁷²⁶ This training was complemented with the distribution of books on child protection, life-skills, leadership skills and human rights to contribute to the reintegration of school children. Apart from these books, schools received learning or recreational packages for admitting former child combatants. Unfortunately the delivery of materials was fraught with delays that in many cases slowed down the reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools and training of teachers. Ultimately these distribution problems were resolved without major long-term consequence.⁷²⁷

Children equally utilised the vocational training and apprenticeship programme. Of the original UNICEF supported 5,000 places, a total of 4,965 child ex-combatants, 3,048 boys and 1,881 girls, took advantage of this option.⁷²⁸ Like the adult skills training, the role-out and subscription of programmes for children was slower than anticipated. For example, by December 2005 only 1,115 children had enrolled in the skills training programme. Liberia's

⁷²⁵ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 60.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Interview 69.

⁷²⁸ Interviews 69 and 78.

low training capacity, limited deployment of implementing partners beyond Monrovia and administrative hurdles contributed to this. Moreover, the decision to not pay children cash allowances and delays in distributing toolkits contributed to the slow enrolment and subscription in the skills programme, as older children opted to go through the adult reintegration process.⁷²⁹

Where possible parallel programmes also took a community-based approach. USAID and the European Commission provided funding for child protection agencies to implement reintegration programmes to cover the remaining caseload. USAID committed itself to covering the costs of 10,000 war-affected children (CAFF and non-CAFF). For instance, Save the Children was contracted to provide reintegration assistance to 5,000 CAFF and other children affected by conflict,⁷³⁰ and the Christian Children's Fund was supported to provide 1,500 CAFF with reintegration benefits.⁷³¹

The social reintegration component had noticeable and far-reaching achievements. Through combined efforts, UNICEF, child protection agencies and donors supported the establishment of approximately 300 CWCs and over 200 Children's Clubs nationwide. CWCs effectively monitored child protection in communities and shared information with child protection agencies in the counties which was in turn shared with Monrovia.⁷³² The Child Clubs created child friendly spaces where both ex-combatant and non-combatant children could go to play, learn, and socialise with members of their communities. The sorts of activities available at Children's Clubs were sports (football, volleyball, kickball), arts and crafts (drawing, choruses, drama, dance) and board games.⁷³³ Besides recreational and social activities, the child club were very effective in monitoring children's activities in their area, providing advice to children and when necessary mediating conflicts between members of communities. Both the CWCs and Children's Clubs contributed to the social reintegration of children in their communities.

The child reintegration process was distinct from the adult process in design, implementation, coordination and funding. That being said there were also significant

⁷²⁹ Interview 23, 55, 69 and United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 61.

⁷³⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume I," Fortnightly DDRR Monitoring Report dated 8/22/2004.

⁷³¹ Christian Children's Fund, *Revitalization of War Affected Communities and Reintegration of Women and Children Associated with the Fighting Forces* (Monrovia, November 2007).

⁷³² United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 60.

⁷³³ Christian Children's Fund, 12.

similarities between the child and adult processes. This reality was somewhat unavoidable given the national situation in Liberia. The limited training capacity, the dilapidated state of the national and social service (namely the education system) and funding constraints also plagued the child reintegration process (although to a lesser extent). Besides their membership on the PAC and representation on the NCDDRR, UNMIL had little to do with the reintegration programme – adult or child. This was both a blessing and a curse for reasons to be discussed. UNDP was responsible for the reintegration programme, and they eagerly transferred the responsibility of the child reintegration process to UNICEF.

The child reintegration process went according to plan. That is not to say that all aspects of the programme went smoothly or without complications, but UNICEF managed the process efficiently given the various challenges faced in Liberia. Unlike disarmament, UNICEF had a greater degree of control and autonomy over the child reintegration process. They were able to make policy decisions directly, without having to defer to UNMIL or UNDP. Moreover, they effectively consulted and collaborated with child protection agencies and the Liberian government when needed.

The adult DDR programme received a lot of criticism, specifically that the reintegration process was not properly planned or given the necessary attention compared to the DD components. The critics claimed that there was a bias in favour of the military components rather than the socio-economic reintegration components. Moreover, critics complained that the planning of adult DD phases the reintegration processes were de-linked. This was the view of not only many of the service providers, but was also acknowledged by both the head of UNMIL's DDR Section, Clive Jachnik and UNDP.⁷³⁴ One example of this lack of planning was the delay in the bulk of reintegration projects available for adult ex-combatants. The separation in planning of the DD and RR phases was reinforced by the structure of the programme. UNMIL was responsible for the DD phases including its funding, while UNDP was responsible for the RR, its planning, funding and implementation. Communication, coordination and collaboration between the two were often strained. That being said, because of UNICEF's role in both the child DD and reintegration phases this problem of separation between the DD and RR phases was more problematic for adults than children. The Strategic Framework was very clear that although the JIU would have overall responsibility of monitoring and oversight of the reintegration

⁷³⁴ Jachnik, "Disarmament and Demobilisation Questionnaire." and United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 55.

programme, UNICEF would manage the child reintegration programme.⁷³⁵ As a result of this mandate and UNICEF's relentless attention to children, they were able to plan for the various components giving the demobilisation and reintegration process continuity, without having to rely too heavily on UNMIL and UNDP. That was a key distinction between the child and adult reintegration process

The Strategic Framework outlined the objectives and activities of the child reintegration programme. The articulated objectives included: (1) family tracing and reunification; (2) access to health, education and skills training; (3) increasing awareness and capacity of family and community child protection; and (4) the enhancement of the capacity of NGOs and agencies to address the needs of child ex-combatants.⁷³⁶ It was envisaged that these four objectives would be accomplished through: (1) the provision of reintegration benefits, such as covering basic education; (2) providing schools with educational materials and enhancing schools' capacity to handle the special needs of child ex-combatants; (3) training social workers in child protection; (4) the support of training and employment of ex-combatants through apprenticeship schemes; and (5) sensitizing receiving communities to the reintegration needs of children.⁷³⁷ Throughout the reintegration programme all these objectives and activities were accomplished and fulfilled by UNICEF and the parallel reintegration programmes. That being said, there are notable successes and shortcomings of the child reintegration process, these will be covered in the following section.

The Cost of Child Reintegration

It has been extremely difficult to ascertain the precise cost of the child reintegration programme or the source of the funding. Despite numerous discussions with representatives from UNMIL (former and present), UNDP (NY, Geneva and Liberia), UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNICEF (present and former in NY and Liberia) and the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict the cost of the child reintegration programme and funding sources seems to either very coveted or unavailable (which is more likely of the two). That being said, one can extrapolate the total figure with the information that is known. The nine-month skills training programme was between \$900 and \$1,100 per child.⁷³⁸ The breakdown of the \$900 was as followed: project staff (\$210 or 23% of total cost); feeding (\$108 or 12% of total cost); tools for training (\$200 or 22% of total cost); raw materials used for training (\$100 or 11% of total cost); start-up kits (\$250 or 28% of total cost); and cost of

⁷³⁵ Draft Interim Secretariat, 37.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ UNICEF, "Annual Report: Child Protection and Participation (2004-2009) " (Monrovia).

operating skills training (\$32 or 4% of total).⁷³⁹ Although UNICEF did not pay the school or examination fees of the students, it is unclear what the per capita cost of the CEIP option was, but it is less than the skills training.⁷⁴⁰ It is safe to assume that the child reintegration process cost approximately \$12 million (inclusive).⁷⁴¹

Successes

That children were given the priority that they received in the Liberian reintegration process, like with DD, was a success in and of itself. The latest attempt of child reintegration was a huge improvement over previous attempt (i.e., 1997) in terms of the number of children it accessed, child retention and community participation. Through the UNICEF supported CEIP and vocational training approximately 9,200 former child soldiers were provided reintegration benefits, and through UNICEF's community-based approach exponentially more children were impacted.⁷⁴² The remaining caseload received their reintegration benefits through parallel projects implemented by child protection agencies.

CEIP undoubtedly improved schools' abilities to enrol, cope with and address some of the needs of child ex-combatants. UNICEF worked closely with the ministry of education to help support their ability to manage their schools, teacher training, and oversight mechanisms. By 2006, 4,295 child ex-combatants directly benefited from reintegration benefits as a result of free education and as a result of the reintegration programme all the students at over 582 participating schools benefited, with a total population of 85,867 students.⁷⁴³ This community-based approach allowed non-combatants to directly benefit from the reintegration of former child soldiers.

During the reintegration process UNICEF exhibited its ability to be flexible and adapt its policies to benefit as many children as possible. One clear example of this was its policy shift regarding supporting private schools with the CEIP. Initially, only public or state schools were supported. Given the reality that private schools were more efficient than public schools, support was extended to them provided they waived the school fees for

⁷³⁹ UNICEF, "A Table Showing the Unit Cost of Training a Demobilised Child in Skills Training," (Monrovia: UNICEF).

⁷⁴⁰ Interview 23.

⁷⁴¹ This is calculated by using the higher figure of the skills training for safe measures (\$1,100), multiplied by the total number of children in the child reintegration process (10,963).

⁷⁴² Interviews 69 and 78.

⁷⁴³ UNICEF, "Annual Report: Child Protection and Participation (2004-2009) ".

child ex-combatants.⁷⁴⁴ This improved the services delivered to ex-combatants and benefited participating private schools overall. Another example of UNICEF's flexibility was to implement a key recommendation of their Market Survey – combining vocational training with an education component. This combination allowed ex-combatants to acquire skills while also benefiting from education initiatives. This was identified as an important lesson that should be implemented in future child reintegration programmes around the world.⁷⁴⁵

To the benefit of many, UNICEF was able to complement their reintegration efforts with their other national programmes, including their reintegration programmes for other vulnerable children. Examples of this include UNICEF's November 2003 launch of the Back-to-School campaign enabling more than 800,000 children to return to the classrooms.⁷⁴⁶ In addition to that, an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) was designed and implemented aimed at rebuilding and furnishing schools around the country. As part of this programme UNICEF's education experts and donors worked with the ministry of education to develop a curriculum and trained teachers to deliver six years of primary education condensed in three years. The classes were delivered in the afternoon and evenings allowing older children and young adults to attend classes without clashing with either work, skills training or their family commitments.⁷⁴⁷ This programme was available to all children and adults, and gave the Liberian education system a real boost. Many of the child ex-combatants that opted for the vocational training accessed education through the ALP.

Children that choose to pursue vocational training and apprenticeships learnt useful skills. Approximately 5,000 children benefited from the UNICEF supported projects. Most of the children passed their courses and after completion of their course received toolkits. That being said, in many ways this was a shallow success as the macro-economic situation in Liberia did not drastically improve enough to absorb these former child soldiers preventing them from finding gainful employment using their newly learnt skills.⁷⁴⁸ This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

⁷⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", section 4.11.3.

⁷⁴⁵ International Labour Office and UNICEF.

⁷⁴⁶ UNICEF, "Press Release: Reintegrating Children Associated with Fighting Forces in Liberia A "Success", (Monrovia: August 2004).

⁷⁴⁷ Interview 69.

⁷⁴⁸ Interviews 23, 56 and focus group III.

The social component of the reintegration programme is arguably where the most success was achieved. Unlike the adult process, UNICEF paid particular attention to addressing the social reintegration and acceptance of former child soldiers back into their communities. This was done through their community-based approach to education as well as through direct interventions such as the establishment and support of CWCs and Children's Clubs. Although the long-term sustainability of these institutions was questionable, by the end of 2007, 217 of the 293 CWCs and 163 of the 228 Children's Clubs created were still active.⁷⁴⁹ A total of over 5,000 members of CWCs and Children's Clubs received child protection, life skills, and conflict resolution training.⁷⁵⁰ It was estimated that 40,000 children benefited from these initiatives.⁷⁵¹ However a key ingredient to the success of social rein was the resilience of former combatants and communities, as well as a common desire to move beyond the impact of the conflict.

In the earlier stages of the reintegration process the behaviour of former child soldiers was disruptive. There was a period of readjustment where they resorted to violence, vulgarity and abuse to get what they wanted. Initially former child soldiers caused disruption in schools, in the skills training programme, in their families and communities. The training that teachers, communities and ex-combatants received was invaluable in addressing behavioural problems. With time, training and attention the behaviour of former child soldiers mellowed.⁷⁵² They became more integrated into community activities, used violence less and befriended non-combatants. The combination of the training, time, involvement in school or vocational training and interacting with community members helped their overall social acceptance, their reintegration and behavioural changes.

As noted earlier, family tracing and reunification was another extremely successful intervention that. Ninety-eight percent of the former child soldiers were reunited with their families and the other 2% were transferred internationally. Moreover follow up visits were an important element of monitoring their progress. UNICEF and child protection agencies conducted at least one follow up visit on the majority of the children. By the end of 2005 7,344 children had received at least one follow up visit.⁷⁵³ This helped monitor and protect

⁷⁴⁹ Interview 78.

⁷⁵⁰ Interview 78.

⁷⁵¹ UNICEF, "Demobilisation and Reintegration Project Document."

⁷⁵² Interview 69.

⁷⁵³ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 61.

against abuse, neglect and possible re-recruitment into fighting factions in neighbouring countries.

Overall the community-based children's approach to reintegration was successful in mitigating the perceived rewards given to the former child soldiers. The cash TSAs given to child ex-combatants left many non-combatants and people within communities with a sense of unfairness. This precedent raised the expectation of child ex-combatants and gave them the impression that they would receive cash subsistence allowances during the reintegration process, like their adult counterparts. When cash allowances did not materialise and their expectations were not met two things happened: sporadic riots broke out and some of the older children changed their preferences to go through the adult programme. Eventually UNICEF was able to effectively explain to former child soldiers that the reintegration benefits were never going to include cash allowances. It was explained that the participants of the vocational training programme would receive toolkits and where relevant or possible small start-up grants. And instead of targeting individual ex-combatants, UNICEF's approach was to target communities. This approach helped diminish the sense of entitlement and expectation that the child soldiers had about cash allowances. Although some children felt betrayed by this, the majority understood.⁷⁵⁴

One of the goals of the child reintegration process was to address the causes of their recruitment into the fighting factions. As noted earlier there were a number of factors that either pushed or pulled them into the conflict. These factors included seeking revenge, poverty, security, as well as being in close proximity to conflict. The implementation of the CPA, including the DDR programme, and the presence of UNMIL peacekeepers were responsible for the absence of war, thus eliminating a major factor of the recruitment. The social reintegration component helped inform communities of the special needs and rights of children, partly aimed to prevent re-recruitment. There were reports in 2005 of children being recruited to fight in armed conflicts in neighbouring countries (mostly Cote d'Ivoire, but also in Guinea) UNICEF and UNMIL investigated these reports.⁷⁵⁵ Despite several people being arrested (and later released), concrete evidence of recruitment could not be proven. UNMIL estimated no more than fifty children were involved in re-recruitment.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁴ Interview 59, 60, 62 and 69.

⁷⁵⁵ UNICEF, "Former Child Soldiers Being Re-Recruited in Liberia"
http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia_25857.html (27 July 2007).

⁷⁵⁶ Interviews 16, 36 and 39.

Shortcomings

Despite the notable successes of the child reintegration programme, there were a series of shortcomings. Most of these shortcomings resembled challenges experienced during the DD processes. Some challenges were a direct result of the failings of the DD process or were victim of the situation in Liberia. Other challenges remained inherently beyond the scope of the reintegration process. Some of these failings were preventable others were not. Some of the failings negatively impacted the overall reintegration process others had less impact. Due to the similarities of the adult and child reintegration programmes many of the challenges affected in both programmes.

Just like with the adult reintegration process, funding posed a problem at various stages. The child reintegration process was slightly more insulated than the adult process, because of UNICEF's arrangements with bilateral donors, but the money that came from the UNDP Trust Fund was not as reliable as it should have been. This was partly due to the oversubscription of adult combatants in the DD processes, and as a result of the dented confidence of donors. Like the adult process, the delay disbursement of funds to the Trust Fund compounded the problem. A lot of time and energy was spent fundraising to close the funding shortfall when reintegration programmes should have already been in full swing. Fortunately these efforts were successful, but this delay did have a few knock-on effects. First, the programme approval process slowed down and programmes in the pipeline were temporarily put on hold. This had meant that children had to wait to receive their reintegration benefits. This had a greater impact on vocational training programmes than on the education option. Donors should have disbursed the money necessary for the child reintegration process before the programme commenced rather than have the money trickle in over time. There were no big surprises with the child reintegration programme. The number of child participants was less than the original estimates. The proposed reintegration options did not change; and their costs were similar to other comparable reintegration programmes.⁷⁵⁷ The funding shortfalls and delays were completely preventable. On 1 March 2006 the Japanese government provided UNICEF with \$6.78 million for child reintegration programmes.⁷⁵⁸ This donation made all the difference to the child reintegration process.

⁷⁵⁷ Interviews 69 and 76.

⁷⁵⁸ UNICEF, "News Note: Japan Provides \$6.78 Million to Liberia's Children," (Monrovia: 1 March 2006).

UNICEF was faced with having to work with and try to build the capacity of an extremely deficient school system that had been neglected for decades. As a result several problems arose with the education option. Like with the adult process, the administration arrangements with the schools were often cumbersome and took longer than anticipated. Although the ministry of education was supportive of CEIP, arrangements had to be made with participating schools on an individual basis. Each school needed to be explained the terms of the agreement, and specifically that they would only receive “in kind” support for the enrolled child ex-combatants and not payment. A serious challenge was the procurement and distribution of school supplies (the educational and recreational kits). The kits were often delivered well after they were promised. The late distribution of school kits negatively impacting the schools’ confidence in UNICEF keeping up its end of the agreement, but equally as important it prevented the schools from being properly supplied and from delivering their lessons although this lack of confidence was overcome. This was a logistical problem, which could and should have been prevented.

The national election campaign, which started in earnest in 2005, disrupted the 2005-6 academic year. Schools opened late as teachers temporarily left their posts in favour for election-related jobs. Although this was understandable given the gravity of the elections this delay nonetheless hindered the delivery of education and left the children idly waiting to resume their studies.

Unlike the CEIP that was designed and implemented with a community-based approach, vocational training specifically targeted former child soldiers. There was a perception within some communities that former child soldiers were being rewarded with reintegration benefits despite UNICEF’s insistence that children not receive subsistence allowances. UNICEF attempted to mitigate these perceptions by allocating a percentage of the skills training places to “war-affected” children. These allocations were relatively small (in some cases 5-10%), which did little to prevent communities’ from feeling former child soldiers were being rewarded with skills training for having been associated to fighting factions. It is possible that regardless of efforts to try to mitigate these perceptions, communities would harbour such feelings because of the lack of socio-economic development throughout the country. This is but one of the many reasons why a national recovery and development strategy was so important.

As experienced in the DD processes of adults and children, the child vocational component was hindered by the limited training capacity in Liberia and dearth in qualified organisations capable of delivering vocational training. This problem was universal throughout Liberia. Understandably during reintegration the PAC attempted to scrutinise the capacity of the service provider before entering into contract with them. However this significantly slowed the process. Some of the child protection agencies involved in the child DD processes developed training programmes and were eventually contracted by UNICEF/UNDP to deliver training programmes to children. The apprenticeship programmes needed to be arranged on an individual basis, which also took more time than anticipated. Moreover, many reintegration programmes were concentrated in urban areas (mostly around Monrovia) despite former child soldiers returning to their communities around the country including in rural areas. The late establishment of NCDDRR Field Offices contributed to the unavailable rural reintegration programme and access to information about benefits. In many cases the high expectations of child ex-combatants was not initially fulfilled.

The distribution of material benefits of the vocational training option, toolkits and start-up capital, was also plagued by delays. Many of the toolkits, which were promised to the trainees upon completion of the programmes, were distributed weeks and in some cases months after the children completed their courses. In addition to the delays, there were complaints from the recipients that the tools were of poor quality.⁷⁵⁹ Some child ex-combatants sold their tools either because they were unable to get paid work or they simply needed the money.⁷⁶⁰ The delay in toolkits had a direct knock-on effect – a delay in the distribution of start-up capital. The view was that the trainees should not receive their start-up capital until they received their tools.⁷⁶¹ Coupled together, the delay in the delivery of the tools and start-up capital damaged UNICEF's credibility in the eyes of some reintegration participants due to unfulfilled promises. Given that the vocational courses were between six and nine months, there was really no excuse for not delivering the trainees' tools and start-up capital when they were promised.⁷⁶²

The quality of both the education and the vocational training the children received were means for concern. Although UNICEF spent much effort on training teachers and

⁷⁵⁹ Interviews 48, 49, 50, 62, and 63.

⁷⁶⁰ Interviews 48, 50, 64 and

⁷⁶¹ Interview 69.

⁷⁶² Interviews 13, 14, 47, 50 and 62.

principals, the education system had suffered from decades of neglect. This is a problem that could not be addressed quickly. Unfortunately, however, participating in the UNICEF supported training was not a guarantee that students would receive a quality education. That being said, the education that former child soldiers received was the same education that was being delivered to all other Liberian children, so at a minimum they were on par with their peers. Regarding vocational training, the instruction provided by the child protection agencies and implementing partners varied in quality, with some projects being better than others. This was bound to be the case as there was no standard curriculum and it was known that the quality of the service providers varied. UNICEF and the former child soldiers had to make do with what was on hand.

One of the main challenges of the economic component of the child reintegration process was the slow pace of the economic recovery in Liberia. It was debatable whether sending children to school or providing them with skills training was in fact improving their employability in an economy that could not absorb them and where few jobs were available. This was a structural problem of which remained beyond the scope of the reintegration programme. The ultimate goal of reintegration was to provide ex-combatants with the opportunity to learn skills to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency. However in most cases, regardless of the training or schooling received, economic self-sufficiency was near impossible given the reality of 80% unemployment.⁷⁶³ Moreover, the situation was particularly bleak for former child soldiers who had to compete with adults receiving similar training. The reintegration information campaigns gave a glimpse of hope and led the ex-combatants to develop high expectations that unfortunately could not be realised given the dire state of the economy. They were being trained for jobs that simply did not exist. Although the UNICEF/ILO Market Survey addressed the high likelihood of this happening, both in terms of the bleak economic prospects and high expectations of ex-combatants, there was little that could be done about this in the short-term.

Despite its acclaimed success, the social reintegration component also had a few shortcomings. Although it was well documented that there was rampant alcohol and drug use during intense periods of fighting, including by children, neither the demobilisation nor reintegration processes offered alcohol or drug treatment or counselling.⁷⁶⁴ This was a large oversight. Liberia and the main stakeholders were very lucky that after the war alcohol and

⁷⁶³ International Labour Office and UNICEF, viii

⁷⁶⁴ Interview 69.

drug use seemed to subside, whether due to reduction in supply or a reduction in economic means to support such habits. They were also lucky social reintegration did not seem to be hindered by disruptive behaviour as a result of addiction.⁷⁶⁵ This oversight should not have happened, and substance abuse programmes should be designed in any future reintegration programmes where valid reports, documentation or indications of alcohol and drug abuse are present.

The extraordinary resilience of both ex-combatants and their communities is undeniable. In Liberia there was a strong common desire to ‘put the war behind and move on.’⁷⁶⁶ This was achieved as a result of the overall resilience of communities rather than through concerted reconciliation efforts. Unlike in Sierra Leone where organised cleansing rituals for ex-combatants were held upon their return to their communities, in Liberia such ceremonies with ex-combatants were not common. Although child protection agencies assisted with the return of child ex-combatants, which consisted of speaking with village elders, community and family members to ensure that the children would in fact be welcomed back, formal rituals did not happen on a large scale. In some cases ex-combatants were presented to the elders and had to ask for forgiveness.⁷⁶⁷ But again, this was not the norm in most communities. One reason for this may have been the inflated number of ex-combatants and a diffusion of guilt of ex-combatants as a result.⁷⁶⁸ Civilians claiming DDR benefits or “fake” ex-combatants would not ask for forgiveness for actions they themselves were victims of.⁷⁶⁹ It may also show the fragility of social structures, where elders could not get the ex-combatants to ask for forgiveness.⁷⁷⁰ Although the CPA called for a mechanism to address national reconciliation, the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was very slow (it was launched on 22 June 2006) and its remit (covering all crimes committed dating back to 1979) was too broad to be particularly useful in assisting communities come to terms with injustices in the short-term.⁷⁷¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission published its final report in December 2009, five years after the ex-combatants returned back to their communities.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁵ Interview 69.

⁷⁶⁶ Interview 62.

⁷⁶⁷ Interview 62.

⁷⁶⁸ Interview 62.

⁷⁶⁹ Interview 62.

⁷⁷⁰ Interview 62.

⁷⁷¹ Interview 80.

⁷⁷² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Consolidated Final Report", Republic of Liberia <https://www.trcofliberia.org/> (30 July 2010).

In sum, overall the child reintegration achieved most of its objectives set out by the Strategic Framework. Unlike the adult programme, the social reintegration of children received significant attention, which was a priority of UNICEF. When possible, a community-based approach to reintegration was taken, rather than just targeting individual ex-child soldiers. Due to structural challenges, the economic component of the child reintegration programme was less successful. Although children received education and skills training their prospects of finding gainful employment were slim due to the decrepit state of the Liberian economy. Although the reintegration programme had formidable challenges, the likelihood of the return to armed conflict was slim. This is in part due to the DDR programme, however the presence of UNMIL peacekeepers played a large role in preventing the resurgence of conflict.

Conclusion

The reintegration process was the third and final stage of the DDR programme. The reintegration process formally began in October 2004 and was officially closed in July 2009 by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.⁷⁷³ Over 90,000 former ex-combatants received reintegration benefits.⁷⁷⁴ The adult DD processes had significant knock-on effects to the child reintegration process, primarily as a result of the large number of participants and specifically in terms of funding and extending the duration of the programme. Although the adult and child reintegration programmes were distinct in design and approach, their logic and components were very similar. Moreover, because of the different benefits, many older children opted to participate in the adult programmes. This is one of the reasons why this thesis focuses on both the adult and child reintegration programmes. The reintegration options consisted of formal education, vocational or skills training, agricultural assistance and public works. Although both the adult and child programmes were meant to have social reintegration components, this was not prioritised in the adult process. Adults and communities were for the most part left to their own device regarding social reintegration. Similarly the adult rehabilitation component was never made operational and existed only in name.⁷⁷⁵ The reintegration programmes (adult and child) were equally challenged by Liberia's multitude of deficits – weak governance structures, decrepit infrastructure and social services, limited training capacity and its crippled economy.

⁷⁷³ United Nations, "Nineteenth Progress Report ", para 15.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Interview 82.

During the reintegration process Liberia underwent a transformative process. In January 2006 the NTGL's tenure ended and as a result of multi-party elections inaugurated Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as Africa's first female president. She inherited a fragile state, one with very weak institutions, huge international debts, and an economy in shambles. The economy was incapable of creating necessary jobs or absorbing newly trained ex-combatants or returning IDPs. Although security was a major concern, it was UNMIL's responsibility. Prior to the election, DDR was a priority of the NTGL, UNMIL and the country's main stakeholders. The election process shifted focus away from the DDR process despite the fact that many of the ex-combatants had not yet received their reintegration benefits or had not yet completed the reintegration programmes they were enrolled in. Although President Johnson-Sirleaf vowed reintegration to be a top priority, there were many other competing issues.

Ex-combatants that opted for the formal education option received three years of free education. In addition to free tuition and examination fees being covered, adults were provided with a \$30 per month subsistence allowance the first year and a \$15 per month allowance for eight months during their second academic year. The child formal education option (CEIP) took a community-based approach. The children received free primary education and were fed a meal everyday while at school. They however did not receive a subsistence allowance. Instead schools received educational and recreational supplies in addition to teachers receiving training benefited the entire school and their communities.

The vocational training option consisted of the ex-combatants learning a trade during a six to nine month course. The skills training were complemented with basic literacy, numeracy and business development lessons. Adults received a \$30 per month subsistence allowance for the duration of the course. Like the education option, instead of receiving an allowance children received a toolkit and start-up capital upon completion of their course.

In spite of the agriculture sector's potential to absorb ex-combatants in addition to potentially having a large impact on the national recovery, agricultural assistance was not a very popular option amongst the ex-combatants. Ex-combatants that opted for this option were taught basic agricultural skills; supplied with tools, agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser and pesticides) and where possible were given a plot of land to till. Unfortunately few agriculture projects were made available to children.

Despite the great expense the impact of the economic reintegration programmes was ambiguous. Although the ex-combatants learned new skills and/or received education many were unable to find employment. Despite their training, the economy was unable to absorb them. They were trained for jobs that simply did not exist, and most remained unemployed.⁷⁷⁶

A major shortcoming of the adult programme was the lack of prioritisation of social reintegration and rehabilitation. Although adults received psychosocial counselling, conflict resolution and peacebuilding education during their five-day stay demobilisation camps, when they returned to their communities their social reintegration was not supported. In terms of adult social reintegration, communities received very little assistance from UNDP or the NCDDRR. In contrast, the reintegration of former child soldiers was a priority of UNICEF and was handled more efficiently and effectively through a network of child protection mechanisms, children's clubs and youth clubs that were established. Returning ex-combatants were generally well received by their communities, despite their involvement in the fighting factions. The neglected adult approach and the concerted social reintegration efforts on behalf of children showed the resilience of individual ex-combatants overcome the stigma associated to being labelled an ex-combatant and the vast majority of the Liberian population for accepting ex-combatants back into their communities.

Another significant shortcoming of the reintegration programmes (both adults and children) was a lack of definition of reintegration. Reintegration was never defined, nor was it articulated what would qualify as a success. The Strategic Framework addressed the broad objectives and activities needed to accomplish reintegration, but neglected to provide benchmarks or indicators of success.

This dramatic omission allowed different stakeholders to use subjective assessments in determining whether the DDR programme was a success. For example, UNMIL took an output rather than impact approach.⁷⁷⁷ According to their official line, the DDR programme was successful because 103,000 ex-combatants were disarmed and demobilised

⁷⁷⁶ UNICEF, "UNICEF Support to Reintegration of Children Associated with Fighting Forces in Liberia: Summary Coverage," (Monrovia: UNICEF).

⁷⁷⁷ Interview 82.

with the majority having received reintegration benefits.⁷⁷⁸ UNDP on the other hand took a different approach. It saw the inflated number of participants as flawed and questioned the credibility of the entire programme. In addition UNDP assessed the quality of the reintegration programmes and despite being ultimately responsible for the reintegration programme claimed that the reintegration met its objectives 'on a very minimum level.'⁷⁷⁹ UNICEF declared the child reintegration a success, they claimed that not only did the demobilised children receive reintegration services, but also the communities benefitted from the reintegration programme through training, supplies, and enhanced child protection capacities.⁷⁸⁰ They particularly noted the achievements of the social reintegration component as successful. Although the economic component did not necessarily improve the economic self-sufficiency of children, UNICEF concerned it a modest success.⁷⁸¹ All points of view are valid, but this highlights the different priorities as well as lack of a common understanding of what qualifies as a successful reintegration programme.

In comparison with the adult process, the child reintegration programme was better planned and provided the beneficiaries greater continuity between demobilisation and reintegration. Many of the child protection agencies that were active during the DD phases remained active throughout the reintegration phase at a local level. The child protection agencies were provided training to communities and teachers in addition to monitoring the activities and protection of not only former child soldiers, but of all children.

Although both the child and adult reintegration programmes achieved most of their modest objectives outlined in the Strategic Framework it may be too early to tell if the child or adult reintegration programmes were successful in the long-term. What is clear is that for the moment that armed conflict has not returned to Liberia. Although it is impossible to determine the exact extent that the reintegration programme contributed to peacebuilding, it seemed to have contributed modestly. As part of the DDR programme ex-combatants were placated by reintegration benefits, even if they did not result in employment. Although the reintegration programme's economic impact on the ex-combatants may be negligible, to not have done anything at all and to not have provided them with assistance certainly would have disrupted the delicate and fragile peace.

⁷⁷⁸ Interview 90.

⁷⁷⁹ United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 10.

⁷⁸⁰ Interviews 28, 69 and UNICEF, "Press Release: Reintegrating Children Associated with Fighting Forces in Liberia A "Success", " (Monrovia: 26 August 2004).

⁷⁸¹ Interview 69 and 78.

Reintegration was part of a combination of factors that contributed to the consolidation of security.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

In this thesis an important question was asked: is child disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration central to post-conflict peacebuilding? This thesis concludes that a comprehensive and dedicated child specific DDR programme, which addresses the needs of child soldiers, is vital for the achievement of peacebuilding objectives and is central to the consolidation of a peace and security. This conclusion resulted from the analysis of the three distinct but interrelated phases of the DDR process, through the prism of the Liberian civil war and the UN and donors' peacebuilding interventions that began in 2003.

The choice of the Liberian child DDR exercise was motivated by not only the significance of the involvement of children throughout the war, but also an interest in preventing, or at a minimum learning, from the previous mistakes in an attempt to strengthen the response to similar future peacebuilding interventions. Liberia's latest attempt at DDR has proven a valuable source of learning for the UN, donors and World Bank, policymakers, DDR experts, civil society and academics.

Main Lessons

The main lessons of the Liberian child DDR programme fall into five categories: 1) planning and implementation; 2) funding and costs; 3) impact; 4) differences between the adult and child DDR; and 5) linkages between adult and child DDR processes.

Planning and Implementation

In Liberia, there was a constant struggle to bridge the gap between the DDR 'plan' and the programme's implementation. Throughout the programme many constraints and pressures

complicated the implementation of both the adult and child DDR programmes. Among the several lessons the Liberian example yielded, it showed that simply having a plan is no guarantee for success. Noting the complexity of post-conflict environments and the various competing priorities, nor can guidelines entirely address all aspects of the implementation of DDR programming. There is an urgent need for contingency planning. Throughout the process, strong and decisive leadership that understands the principles and application of child protection and its implications to security and peacebuilding more generally were crucial in the implementation of the peacebuilding strategy.

The general vision and strategy for the child DDR process was articulated and outlined in the Strategic Framework, and expanded upon by UNICEF. Because of their expertise and experience with child protection, UNICEF was mandated and made responsible for the development and implementation of the child DDR process. They advised policymakers on child protection concerns, enhanced child protection mechanisms (including by providing training) and participated in the project selection and technical coordination committees. It was encouraging that UNICEF had an input regarding technical decisions relating to the implementation of the DDR programme (both adult and child), however from the NCDDRR, the body empowered to make the policy decisions, was a serious omission with far reaching consequences. The most significant of which, was the decision to give children cash transitional subsistence allowances for participating in the DDR programme. Child protection agencies, such as Save the Children, Oxfam and International Rescue Committee, claimed that such cash transfers contributed to children's insecurity overall while also setting a dangerous precedent for future child DDR programmes.

Important policy and operational decisions were made in Liberia with a systematic lack of understanding of child protection concerns and principles. This lack of understanding was pervasive among UNMIL officials (including MILOBs), Liberian senior decision-makers, and a significant portion of Liberia's civil society. Although UNMIL had allocated and budgeted for a Child Protection Advisor meant to advise senior management on relevant issues and concerns, the position remained vacant for almost two years until February 2005, well after the DD phases concluded. This meant that UNMIL lacked the internal expertise and guidance to advocate for child protection. Senior UNMIL management were neither knowledgeable about nor sympathetic to issues relating to child soldiers or child protection and in many ways saw the DDR process as a short-term weapons collection exercise. Few understood the principles of child protection, how to address the special

needs of child soldiers, or more practically how to implement some of the child DDR guidelines articulated in the Strategic Framework. This unfortunate mixture of ignorance and apathy resulted in few of MILOBs fully understanding their responsibility to screen children or properly implement the DDR's entry criteria. This lack of understanding posed a serious obstacle for children's inclusion into the programme throughout the duration of the disarmament phase. Although UNICEF and child protection agencies offered child protection training in the MILOBs, delays to the disarmament process and out-of-sync rotational schedules resulted in high turnover during the disarmament and demobilisation phases. This meant that scarce resources had to be re-deployed constantly to train new arrivals and this often took time to organise. Liberian decision-makers, many who were combatants themselves, paid lip-service to child protection concerns, and in the end based their decisions on what benefited their interests rather than what was in the best interest of the children. Although, ultimately, there was an increased understanding of child protection, the tendency to base decisions on political imperatives was always a recurrent threat.

The child DDR experience in Liberia has illustrated that there are several things that would help contribute to the success of any DDR programme. The timing and the sequence of events are key elements that need careful consideration when planning for DDR. In addition to formulating a Strategic Framework, combatants and communities need to be made aware of the DDR programme. Practical issues such as timeframe, site locations and the benefits given to combatants (including the differences to the adult programme) must be made clear; an effective and sufficiently large peacekeeping presence is needed on the ground to effectively enforce and maintain a certain amount of security; the cantonment sites need to be accessible, ready and properly supplied; those responsible for implementing the disarmament and demobilisation processes need to understand how to fulfill their responsibilities, including as they relate to children. Moreover, upon commencement of disarmament, the demobilisation and reintegration processes must be planned for and ready for implementation.

In December 2003, at the initial start of the DDR programme, besides the formulation of the Strategic Framework, not many preparations or arrangements were in place. The DDR operational plan was flimsy and not fully developed; the cantonment sites were not ready; peacekeeping troop deployment was inadequate (deployment was less than half of its mandated level). Lastly, the combatants were not properly informed about the DDR

process or the benefits they would receive. All of this was known to UNMIL senior management and was well documented prior to the commencement. Many of these issues were addressed and things ran smoother once the DDR programme re-started in April 2004.

The near tripling of DDR participants was not only a problem of planning, but also a failure of implementing the plan. Despite the warring factions being required to submit a comprehensive list of their eligible troops, these lists never materialised. Surprisingly the factions were not compelled to produce such lists prior to the start of the DDR programme, or after the programme was suspended in December, or even later once it was clear the estimates were woefully wrong. Without this crucial information, including accurate number of combatants and their locations, it was near impossible to effectively plan the DDR programme.

Another major contributing factor to the skyrocketing number of participants was the easily manipulated entry criteria. Men had to surrender either a weapon, be part of a group submission of a heavy weapon, or surrender 150 rounds of ammunition. This threshold, in the absence of confirmed lists, created an open market for weapons and ammunition for gaining entry into the programme. Moreover, the MILOBs responsible for screening did not adequately test the combatants' knowledge of weaponry or fighting, a process that would have helped prevent civilians attempting to enter the programme. The entry criterion for women and children was different from that of men. Women and children did not have to surrender a weapon. In theory, they simply needed to be associated to a fighting faction and turn up for disarmament. In addition, the definition of a child soldier was based on the Cape Town Principles and many of the military observers simply did not understand or agree with that definition. In an attempt to implement a comprehensive DDR programme, Liberia's entry criteria favoured the inclusion of women and children rather than excluding them based on their ability to surrender weapons. In a misguided attempt to apportion blame, the entry criterion of women and child was cited as a main contributing factor for the high number of combatants. Although the participation of women in the DDR programme was certainly severely underestimated it was not the only factor contributing to the large number of participants. It was originally estimated that only 1,000 women would participate in DDR programme.⁷⁸² The final total number of women

⁷⁸² Draft Interim Secretariat, 39.

participants was 22,456.⁷⁸³ Moreover, a total of 11,282 children participated in the DDR programme, which was only approximately forty percent higher than the original estimate of 8,000.⁷⁸⁴ The total number of child combatants was still below the estimated of children of 15,000 – 21,000 children thought to have been recruited and associated with the fighting factions.⁷⁸⁵ Therefore, the forty percent oversubscription of children did not significantly contribute to the tripling of combatants in the DDR programme. Although many more women came forward and participated in the DDR programme, men represented the largest group in the DDR programme, accounting for 67% of the total participants.⁷⁸⁶

The disarmament and demobilisation processes were delinked in terms of ownership, planning, funding, time, sequencing and implementation from the reintegration process. UNMIL was responsible for the DD phases, and UNDP was responsible for the adult reintegration phase, which consisted of either formal education or vocational training programmes. Despite the reintegration process formally starting in June 2004, for the majority of the ex-combatants there was a big lapse before they received their reintegration benefits. In fact, by June 2007 81,000⁷⁸⁷ ex-combatants had received their reintegration assistance, well short of the total 101,874 eligible ex-combatants.⁷⁸⁸ The residual or final caseload of ex-combatants did not receive their reintegration benefits until the final phase started in January 2008, four years after they were demobilised.⁷⁸⁹ The environment in which DDR was being implemented was challenging and the programme suffered from of a combination of bad planning, limited capacity, over-stretched human and financial resources, but mostly a lack of leadership. The leadership simply failed to bring all these elements together in a coordinated way: UNMIL saw the overall DDR process as a weapons collection exercise, while UNDP was more concerned with the medium to long-term goals of the reintegration process but failed to make the necessary arrangements to absorb the demobilised ex-combatants into programmes in a timely fashion. Understandably, there were many pressures including achieving quick results regarding peacebuilding initiatives immediately following the peace agreement. However, these

⁷⁸³ NCDDRR.

⁷⁸⁴ Draft Interim Secretariat, 39; NCDDRR.

⁷⁸⁵ Amnesty International.

⁷⁸⁶ NCDDRR.

⁷⁸⁷ United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Assistance to Liberia DDRR Programme Residual Caseload," 5.

⁷⁸⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "Status of Reintegration Activities for Ex-Combatants," in *Briefing Note No9*(Monrovia: UNDP, 8 June 2007), 5.

⁷⁸⁹ United Nations Development Programme, "Reintegration Assistance to Liberia DDRR Programme Residual Caseload," 6.

pressures, including the difficult and politically charged post-conflict environment, should not have precluded UNMIL and UNDP from devising a coherent plan to expeditiously address the programme objectives as well as the needs of the ex-combatants and their communities.

Regarding child demobilisation and reintegration, UNICEF did a much better job of coordinating, ensuring a greater level of coherence and consistency between the demobilisation and reintegration processes, as well as in trying to standardise their reintegration programmes. The fact that they oversaw both demobilisation and reintegration helped these efforts. That being said, due to the cumbersome and time-consuming process of registering schools into the formal education programme and finding suitable service providers to teach skills training, although less prolonged than the adult process, there were significant delays before children could access their reintegration benefits. UNICEF's main concerns during the DDR programme were that the children receive the attention they deserved, and that once the child ex-combatants were resettled, their communities were supported to receive them and protect the former child soldiers from being re-recruited. Through their persistent advocacy and effective implementation of the child DDR process, UNICEF and the child protection agencies managed to address children's needs as part of the international peacebuilding intervention, at the local, national and international level.

Liberia's DDR plan as outlined in the Strategic Framework at *prima facie* looked good. Its mandate and objectives were clear, to rid Liberia of weapons and turn combatants into productive citizens and by doing so contributing to the consolidation of peace. The ownership issues and procedures were simply outlined. But in reality, its implementation was not quite as simple as outlined. For instance, even though the NCDDRR was meant to substantively contribute to national ownership of the DDR programme, the reality was that its capacity was always extremely limited and its leadership highly politicised and not necessarily acting in the best interest of children. Until 2006, when the NCDDRR was restructured under President Sirleaf Johnson's administration, the NCDDRR added little substantive value. The former commanders pulled strings and made policy decisions that served their purposes. Moreover, during the transition period it served both the NTGL and UNMIL for the NCDDRR to be weak and malleable so they could dictate policy direction. The Strategic Framework was a good starting point, which was its purpose. The problem, however, was that it was never further expanded upon and a robust monitoring framework

was never implemented, no clear benchmarks were set, and data did not drive the process as it should or could have. This ambiguity allowed for subjectivity regarding the accomplishment of the programme's objectives and its successes, beyond the number of combatants reached.

Funding and Costs

The DDR programme was supported through several funding streams. The peace agreement explicitly called on the financial support of the UN, IFIs and donors to finance the entire process. UNMIL was responsible for funding the disarmament phase through its operational budget. The demobilisation and reintegration phases were to be funded either through a multilateral DDR Trust Fund managed by UNDP or through parallel programmes funded by bilateral donors. The main funders of the Trust Fund were the European Community, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, United States of America, Norway, Switzerland, Ireland and Iceland.⁷⁹⁰ The original estimate for the cost of the programme was \$50 million in addition to UNMIL's portion of \$20 million for the military-related activities of DD.⁷⁹¹ The Trust Fund estimate was revised to \$71.3 million to cover more than the increased number of participants (excluding UNMIL's contribution).⁷⁹² The DDR budget was constantly strained as a result of the oversubscription of the DDR programme and delays in the disbursement of funds. Costs saving measures to reduce the per capita expenditure were taken in all the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration phases of the adult process. Although the DDR programme was fully funded in the end, during the process the donors were slow to disburse committed funds therefore contributing to the programme's many challenges. The funds in the Trust Fund were not earmarked for the different implementation phases, which meant that the available resources were used when they were needed, exhausting (or at a minimum severely depleting) the funds before the reintegration phase. This happened, for example, with UNMIL borrowing \$12 million from the Trust Fund to run demobilisation activities depleting funding for reintegration programme. In response to the high number of participants and the many challenges that arose, many donors and critics questioned the success, credibility and impact of Liberia's DDR programme. The persistent funding shortages contributed to the inability to deliver reintegration programmes in a timely fashion and resulted in the unfulfilled expectations of the ex-combatants. There was

⁷⁹⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume II ", 12.

⁷⁹¹ Draft Interim Secretariat, 39.

⁷⁹² United Nations Development Programme, "Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme Trust Fund Activity Report: Volume III ", 13.

always the fear that unfulfilled expectation would lead to insecurity. Operationally, many of these challenges were preventable had the necessary information such as accurate combatant numbers and locations been ascertained, allowing for proper planning. That being said, it is not clear that UNMIL would have effectively used this information in the planning process or that it would have improved the planning or execution of the programme.

The child DDR process was supported through multilateral and bilateral funding channeled through both UNICEF directly and the UNDP DDR Trust Fund. Experience taught UNICEF to secure its funding directly rather than to rely upon cumbersome multilateral support through the UNDP Trust Fund, although the multilateral funding was a good fallback option. The main funders of the child DDR process were the governments of the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and the European Commission. The child DDR process also suffered from slow disbursement of funding, although not to the same degree as the adult process. Strained budgets slowed down the formalization of administrative contracts with reintegration service providers and schools. Although this was overcome in the end, it was an avoidable challenge.

Despite the unexpectedly large number of adult participants and the programme's soaring budget, in comparison to UNMIL's overall budget, the cost of the DDR programme was negligible. Between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2008 UNMIL's budget was \$3.322 billion (see chart).⁷⁹³ The cost of the DDR programme was \$150 million.⁷⁹⁴ Of that \$150 million, the child DDR process cost was approximately \$12.4 million (based on the \$1,100 cost per child).⁷⁹⁵ Therefore the child DDR costs amounted to 8.5% of the total DDR expenditure, again, not a significant amount to enable the peacebuilding process to progress.

The Cost of UNMIL (2003 – 2008)

⁷⁹³ United Nations, "Performance Report on the Budget of the United Nations Mission in Liberia for Period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008," (New York: United Nations, 4 December 2008), 2. United Nations, "Performance Report on the Budget of the United Nations Mission in Liberia for Period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007," (New York: United Nations, 17 January 2008), 2. United Nations, "Performance Report on the Budget of the United Nations Mission in Liberia for Period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006," (New York: United Nations, 26 January 2007), 2. United Nations, "Budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for Period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007," (New York: United Nations, 19 January 2006), 2. United Nations, "Budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the Period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006," (New York: United Nations, 20 December 2004), 2.

⁷⁹⁴ Albert Caramés, Vincenç Fisas, and Daniel Luz, *Analysis of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Programmes Existing in the World During 2005* (Barcelona: Escola de Cultura de Pau, 2006)..

⁷⁹⁵ UNICEF, "Annual Report: Child Protection and Participation (2004-2009) ".

Year (30 June to 1 July)	Budget Expenditure
2003 - 2004	\$ 548,278,700
2004 - 2005	\$ 741,084,000
2005 - 2006	\$ 707,368,900
2006 -2007	\$ 676,254,800
2007 – 2008	\$ 649,469,100
Total	\$ 3,322,508,300

Source: A compilation of UN official documents

With the benefit of hindsight, given DDR's central role in contributing to the consolidation of peace and security and the peacebuilding efforts, the total cost of the DDR programme can and should be seen as a bargain. Moreover, DDR should be seen as a necessary expenditure and investment. However, when DDR was being implemented (between 2003 and 2008), as the budget was ballooning with the increased number of combatants it was not seen as a bargain. At the time, UNMIL's annual budget (of approximately \$548 million in 2003⁷⁹⁶ and \$741 million in 2004⁷⁹⁷) was more than the national GDP of Liberia (which was \$410 million in 2003 and \$459 million in 2004).⁷⁹⁸ The GDP per capita was \$130 and the cost of DDR was \$1,550 per adult combatant and \$1,100 per child.⁷⁹⁹ A per capita DDR expenditure that was more than ten-times the GDP per capita (which was \$131 in 2003) was seen as exorbitant.⁸⁰⁰ When looking at the big picture, the DDR programme can be seen as buying time for peace and security to be consolidated to allow the transitional government and UNMIL the time to extend their authority and make progress towards other peacebuilding initiatives.

Achievement of Objectives and Impact

There is a persistent and inherent tension between what is required to set a post-conflict country back onto a sustainable path of development, economic growth and good governance and what can feasibly be delivered through a DDR programme. A DDR programme is not, nor can it be, a job creation programme. Reintegration can provide ex-combatants with skills, not jobs. A DDR programme cannot change the macro-economic situation. Although it can contribute, it cannot on its own alter or improve the structural or

⁷⁹⁶ United Nations, "Budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the Period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006," 2.

⁷⁹⁷ United Nations, "Budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for Period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007."

⁷⁹⁸ World Bank, "Open Data" <http://data.worldbank.org/> (22 December 2010).

⁷⁹⁹ UNICEF, "Annual Report: Child Protection and Participation (2004-2009) ".

⁸⁰⁰ World Bank.

governance arrangements in a country. That is well beyond its reach and intention. Those are the objectives of other peacebuilding initiatives meant to support and complement DDR. In a bid to preventing resurgence in armed conflict DDR is meant to contribute to removal of weapons in society, help break down command structures and provide ex-combatants with educational and skills training opportunities as well as to assist their return into their communities. There is a need for the DDR programme to have ambitious but achievable objectives.

For many of the ex-combatants DDR was seen as a social protection mechanism. Many saw DDR as a good opportunity and in most cases the only way to gain free access to skills training, education, cash assistance and the other benefits that were on offer (such as counseling or life skills). This is reflected in the inflated number of participants, many of who were allegedly not combatants. This was noted in both official documents and interviews with respondents.⁸⁰¹ Irrespective of whether the cash allowance that the ex-combatants received was used as it was intended, the cash allowance directly injected \$30 million into local economies. DDR can assist in providing ex-combatants with viable options and an alternative to what they could commandeer through the barrel of a gun, But these efforts must be complemented by improvements in the socio-economic situation throughout the country. The goals of the child DDR programme were to remove them from the fighting factions, to reunify them with their families, to break the command structure and the influence their commanders have on them, to provide them with access to health, basic education and/or skills training, to support their return to as well as acceptance of their communities and to improve child protection mechanisms throughout the country.⁸⁰² The best-case scenario is that DDR will create a window of opportunity for peace consolidation and complementary peacebuilding initiatives to coalesce. It is this enabling effect that DDR programmes should be judged on vis-à-vis peacebuilding.

Liberia's DDR programme did contribute to the consolidation of peace and security of the nation. Exactly how much is impossible to measure as the consolidation of peace resulted from a combination of multiple factors and efforts. The DDR programme was only one, albeit a notable and integral component of the peacebuilding intervention. The success of the DDR programme, and its enabling effect, was in part due to UNMIL's robust peacekeeping presence, its civilian work aimed at addressing security and governance

⁸⁰¹ Focus group II.

⁸⁰² Draft Interim Secretariat, 70.

deficits including rule of law, security, state authority, economic growth and recovery, the organisation of multiparty elections, humanitarian assistance and the resettlement of displaced people.

Differences between Child and Adult DDR

By the conclusion of the DDR programme both the adult and child DDR processes had accomplished most of the objectives articulated in the Strategic Framework. This was not because the DDR programmes were flawlessly implemented, but because the objectives were not too ambitious. Moreover, the success of the process hinged more on delivering services to all of the combatants, rather than the quality of those services or whether they resulted in improving the plight of the combatants and their communities. The objectives were also remarkably vague and included things such as raising the awareness about the DDR processes, ex-combatant using their ID cards to access reintegration services and ex-combatants being aware of their health profiles.⁸⁰³ UNMIL and the NCDDRR were satisfied as long as the combatants received their services, irrespective of the quality of services or their impact.

The adult and child DDR processes took slightly different approaches to demobilisation and reintegration programming. Adults stayed at the demobilisation sites for a maximum of five days, and went through very condensed programming. During reintegration they were targeted as the sole beneficiaries and received subsistence allowances while enrolled in either formal education or skills training enabling them to support themselves. There was an over-reliance on the economic reintegration component at the expense of the social reintegration, which received scant attention and little support. Children, on the other hand, spent up to twelve weeks in interim care centres where their demobilisation took place and their reintegration process began. They received counselling as well as time and space to be children again, to learn and play while transitioning back into their communities as civilians. Although former child soldiers benefited directly from the reintegration programming, UNICEF and the child protection agencies, took a broader community-based approach in the delivery of the reintegration benefits. To mitigate the perception of rewarding the former child soldiers, they were not given subsistence allowance, but instead, their benefits were delivered through in-kind support benefiting the wider community. Unlike the adult process, the child process placed a great deal of

⁸⁰³ Ibid., 41.

emphasis on the social reintegration component, training communities in child protection and supporting social reintegration. Every former child soldiers that participated in the DDR programme, ninety-eight percent in Liberia and two percent internationally, were reunited with their families contributing to the success of the social reintegration programme. These distinctions between the adult and child processes showed a concerted effort on behalf of the UN to respond to the reality of children's engagement in armed conflict and the need to address their special needs as well as their vulnerabilities.

When analysing the impact of child and adult DDR programming on Liberia's peacebuilding efforts, it is important to consider not just the programme's contribution to peacebuilding, but also the impact upon the ex-combatants' lives both socially and economically. Socially, the child reintegration process was supported by a series of coordinated activities of child protection agencies throughout the country, although exactly how this process contributed to their acceptance by their communities is hard to define. In contrast, the adult social reintegration component was neglected. The reasons why the former combatants were accepted back into their communities with limited protest or problems had little to do with the reintegration process. The macro-economic situation in Liberia following the war was dire. Eighty percent of the population was unemployed in the years that followed the 2003 peace agreement.⁸⁰⁴ Economic demand was insufficient to fuel economic growth at the level necessary to provide large-scale employment or significantly contribute to poverty alleviation. Although adult and child reintegration programmes attempted to address economic reintegration through formal education and skills training aimed at improving the chances of the ex-combatants' employability, neither achieved this objective *en masse*. The reason for this failure was structural and simple: jobs and demand did not exist, regardless of the skill sets available. The hope was that once the economy improved, the newly learnt skills would be in demand and jobs would be forthcoming but there was no immediate plan to improve job creation.

Although the severity of the economic situation was known prior to the reintegration programme, there was need to balance various competing concerns. On the one hand through their reintegration programmes the UN and donors needed to provide goods and services to the ex-combatants that were not only promised but also demanded. On the other hand, there was a need to deliver effective programmes with the hope that they

⁸⁰⁴ International Labour Office and UNICEF, 14.

would be economically useful. This inherent tension illustrates the importance of the DDR programme not only being in sync with but also their need to be supported by national reconstruction efforts and recovery strategies. The individual impact of the social and economic reintegration programmes on both adults and children are more ambiguous than the DDR programmes' impact on peacebuilding.

Linkages between Child and Adult DDR

Despite the adult and child DDR effectively being separate processes, the adult DDR process had a significant impact on the child process. This impact was unavoidable and the linkages between the adult and child DDR process occurred on multiple levels. Although UNICEF had much leeway regarding operational and implementation arrangements, the child process had to work within the limitations of the adult process. The NCDDRR had a strong say in deciding policy issues. The lack of accurate information regarding combatants also affected the child process. As they ran concurrently, extending the duration of the adult DDR process had a knock-on effect on the child process. Although it was UNMIL's responsibility to resolve any operational challenges that arose during the disarmament process, such as the difficulties with children being screened for entrance into the programme, it was an on-going battle for child protection agencies to ensure the Cape Town Principles were adhered to. There were constant complaints from the child protection agencies that despite being outlined in the Strategic Framework and being mandated by UNMIL as a top priority, children were sidelined and marginalised during the disarmament process.

Another significant linkage between the adult and child DDR processes was that as a direct result of the DDR, children were released from the fighting factions and were given an opportunity to return to their families to try and have a life beyond armed conflict. The ceasefire and the DDR process allowed many of the children caught up in the armed factions an opportunity to benefit from the demobilisation and reintegration processes. If the complementary peacebuilding activities and the DDR programme had not managed to persuade the combatants to lay down their weapons, the factions would not have been disbanded, nor would the recruitment of children been able to be addressed. This process started with the peace agreement, had it not explicitly highlighted the special needs of children, they may well have been ignored.

This thesis comes to two main conclusions with regard to the centrality of child DDR to peacebuilding. First, Liberia's adult DDR programme achieved most of its objectives

despite significant design flaws and implementation gaps; DDR was a critical contribution to peacebuilding and the consolidation of peace and security. It was clear that without a DDR programme, even a flawed one, the political situation would not have been enabled to improve. After a turbulent start to the process in December 2003, which saw rioting, looting and a deterioration of an already fragile state of security, the DDR programme was suspended until April 2004 to allow for further planning and necessary preparations. Once the programme resumed, from a security perspective, both the adult and child DDR processes ran more smoothly. Despite the disarmament process yielding a low weapons-to-combatant-ratio, the DDR programme still had the intended effect of providing a sense of security and was able to incentivise the combatants to renounce violence. This was of course supported by a large peacekeeping presence responsible for monitoring and enforcing the peace agreement. Although the credibility of the DDR programme was severely questioned as a result of the lax implementation of the entry criteria and the inflated number of participants (triple the original estimate), this did not necessarily render the DDR programme ineffective. And in spite of severe delays in providing reintegration benefits the situation remained manageable and as of December 2010, has not deteriorated or slid back into conflict. In that sense, the DDR programme served its purpose and enabled other peacebuilding initiatives to progress.

Second, despite the DDR programme suffering from numerous structural and operational challenges that both slowed down the process and complicated its implementation, the child DDR programme was successful in delivering its various components and achieved many of its objectives. Although it is clear that many children were not able to access the DDR programme, a total of 10,963 took advantage of the DDR programme and its benefits. Children spent up to twelve weeks in interim care centres where they received life-skills, basic education (for numeracy and literacy) and health services. Ninety-eight percent of all former child combatants were reunited with their families in Liberia or provided with alternative living arrangements; the other two percent were repatriated to their countries of origin and reunited with their families there. Formal education was the only reintegration option for children younger than fourteen years of age, while older children were given the option of pursuing skills training or formal education. All things considered, the child DDR process delivered most of its objectives: children were discharged from the ranks of the fighting factions, they went through the demobilisation programme, they received goods as well as benefited from services to assist in their social and economic reintegration, while the child protection capacities of both government and local communities' were

enhanced and improved. Had the children not been included in the DDR programme, they may have posed an immediate as well as a long-term threat to security, which was mitigated by addressing their needs.

There were many simultaneous efforts that contributed to the effective implementation of child DDR in Liberia. With the signing of the peace agreement in 2003, Liberia had an opportunity to break the cycle of conflict that plagued the country for fourteen years. A crucial political opportunity presented itself in not only the peace agreement, but also in the deployment of UNMIL and the transitional government. There was recognition that earlier failed DDR attempts were a contributing factor in continuation of the conflict and there was a strong desire not to repeat similar mistakes. The desire to prevent previous mistakes and break Liberia's cycle of violence were powerful motivating factors for the UN, donors and IFIs as well as specifically for the leaders of UNMIL who needed to show quick progress. By 2003, the importance of child soldiers had gained international recognition and earned a permanent place on the UN Security Council's agenda. The UN Security Council and the Secretary-General mandated child protection measures and mechanisms be incorporated into peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding efforts where appropriate. Liberia fit the bill. It was a prime example of where child protection needed to be taken very seriously and incorporated into not only DDR programming but all peacebuilding activities.

The Liberian peacebuilding intervention came at an interesting juncture in the evolution and development of various concepts, responses and policy frameworks. At that time, the UN was reforming how it conducted peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding interventions, in an attempt to make them more comprehensive, apply lessons of previous interventions and share best practices. Aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict by addressing the political, economic and social deficits, the UN's approach to peacebuilding was eventually integrated and implemented as standard operating procedure in post-conflict situations. Given Liberia's destabilising effect in the sub-region, the UN needed its robust multidimensional peacekeeping intervention to succeed.

Explicitly addressing children's needs in DDR programming was a fairly novel approach. In neighbouring Sierra Leone, the UN was winding down its peacekeeping mission just as the Liberian peacebuilding strategy was starting to be implemented. Many of the people responsible for DDR in Sierra Leone moved on to Liberia. Although the two countries

DDR programmes had similarities, such as the sequencing of events, funding constraints and limited local capacity issues, there were also significant differences between the two programmes. The political situation in each country was different, as were the scale of the programmes, the institutional arrangements and the personalities involved in decision-making. At a policy level some lessons had been learned in Sierra Leone and were being implemented in Liberia, particularly the implementation of a child specific DDR programme. Following UNICEF's insistence, the Sierra Leonean peace agreement set an important precedent by explicitly addressing the need for a child DDR programme and the need to integrate child protection into the national policies. Liberia followed suit. Both peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions were in many ways test cases, which in turn contributed to the standardization of future child DDR programming.

Wider Implications

Liberia's most recent DDR experience has wider implications for the growing field of peacebuilding and offers some important lessons. This study has practical and political implications, as well as on the research in the relevant fields. What resulted in a long drawn out six year process, illustrated not only the importance of addressing the disarmament, demobilising and reintegration combatants, but also that addressing the needs of child soldiers are integral and crucial to the success of such processes. Liberia has shown that DDR, even a flawed DDR process, can help provide an enabling environment allowing for the consolidation of peace and also contribute to the appeasement and managing of expectation of adult and child combatants. Liberia also illustrates that DDR is only one piece, albeit an important one, of the peacebuilding puzzle and that it needs to be accompanied by coordinated political, economic and social interventions. One cannot under-estimate the importance of the political environment in the consolidation of peace and security in a post-conflict context. Although each post-conflict situation is unique, the UN is commonly called upon to ensure relevant issues, such as child protection, are addressed explicitly in the peace agreements and implemented in the subsequent peacebuilding interventions.

The focus on children during the Liberian DDR process was the result of a combination of factors. There was international recognition about the realities of child soldiers, strong advocacy work by child protection agencies and the UN's desire to improve its peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions. The war in Liberia was being fought and its

DDR programme implemented as the UN and its members' response to child soldiers was being developed. The anti-child soldiers movement started gaining momentum in the late 1990's and has been continuously enhanced through the strengthening of awareness, policies, programmes, monitoring and sanctions. It was Graça Machel's report to the UN General Assembly in 1996 that initially guided the UN to acknowledge the impact of armed conflict on children and significantly contributed to an increased awareness and understanding of the multitude of roles children have in war. Since this breakthrough report although there has been an accumulation of experience, knowledge and a series of policy instruments at international, regional and national levels to address the issue of child soldiers gaps still exist. Child protection is an area where policies have resulted in concrete actions on the ground, as we saw in Liberia. It is unlikely that, where appropriate, peacekeeping or peacebuilding interventions will in the future not incorporate child protection mechanisms. That being said, as we saw in Liberia, policies do not necessarily translate into proper implementation or prioritisation.

International policy has made much progress in a relatively short amount of time regarding the use and recruitment of child soldiers. Every year since 2000, the UN Security Council has discussed children and armed conflict and has considerably strengthened its response. In 2005, the Security Council established the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, a mechanism to monitor and report grave abuses to children taking place in countries already on the Council's agenda.⁸⁰⁵ The use and recruitment of child soldiers has been criminalised and mechanisms aimed at addressing impunity have been established and are operational. Both the International Criminal Court and the Special Court for Sierra Leone have indicted suspects for the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Embodied in and emboldened by policies, various UN agencies and offices attempted to tackle the reality of child soldiers by preventing their use, monitoring, release, reintegration and holding those responsible for their abuse accountable. Although these efforts are not adequate to deal with the severity of the situation they are a promising development.

Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General acknowledged that UN-implemented DDR programmes were being planned in an *ad hoc* manner and were being inconsistently implemented throughout the world.⁸⁰⁶ In response, a task force was created in 2004 and

⁸⁰⁵ United Nations, "Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict" <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/securitycouncilwg.html> (14 February 2010).

⁸⁰⁶ United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration."

held a consultation process of relevant actors (including representatives from the UN system, multilateral financial institutions, civil society, etc.) who were asked to develop a comprehensive set of standards to guide DDR programmes. In 2006, the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), along with supplementary Operational Guidelines to the IDDRS and DDR Briefing Note for Senior Managers were published.⁸⁰⁷ The IDDRS were intended to improve the coordination, cohesiveness, and application of best practices in the planning, management and implementation of DDR programmes. The issue of children (and youth) in DDR programmes was addressed as a cross-cutting issue, seen as central to the success of DDR programming and peacebuilding interventions in the IDDRS. Substantial guidance was given on how best to address their special needs. The necessary points were addressed in the document. For instance, the planning process and best practices for information sensitization processes are outlined. A strong case is presented for the articulation for the special needs of children in the formulation of peace agreements is provided, as is the need for inclusive eligibility criteria for children in DDR programmes and age-specific programming during the national recovery. Moreover, the IDDRS addresses the need for any child DDR programme to be seen as a long-term investment, one modeled on a community-based approach and complemented by comprehensive national recovery plans.⁸⁰⁸

It was clear from previous attempts at DDR as well as from the Secretary-General's acknowledgment that there was much room for improvement and need for greater clarity of the UN's approach to both adult and child DDR. The development of the IDDRS and policy prescriptions were a step in the right direction to addressing these deficiencies. Practitioners and policymakers welcomed the guidance and call for a more comprehensive, coherent and consistent approach to DDR. Senior managers will now be provided with uniform guidance on how to handle the planning process, what DDR should consist of, clear and comprehensive policy direction.⁸⁰⁹ Child protection agencies, participated in the development of the IDDRS, welcomed the greater prioritisation of child protection principles in DDR programming and strongly supported the centrality of the role of child DDR in peacebuilding. This shift of mindset was agreed, at least in principle and on paper.⁸¹⁰ Although Liberia's DDR experience was a notable input into the development of

⁸⁰⁷ United Nations, "Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards," (New York: United Nations, December 2006).

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid., Children and DDR Module 5.30

⁸⁰⁹ Interview 103.

⁸¹⁰ Interviews 85 and 87.

the guidelines, it was published too late for the guidelines and collective lessons to influence or impact its DDR process. The guidance and many of the policy positions would have directly helped reduce many of the inconsistencies and weaknesses of Liberia's DDR process.

Another important lesson from the Liberian DDR experience is that regardless of the strength of the policies or instruments available regarding child soldiers and child DDR the personalities of senior management in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions have the potential to be a positive force, neutral force or negative force. The impact of personalities, positive or negative, cannot be underestimated in the implementation of peacebuilding activities. Although the supplementary publications encourage senior managers to seek the advice and expertise necessary for successfully implementing comprehensive DDR programmes, this is no guarantee for success. Some senior managers may not heed the advice of others or may be pressured into certain decisions. It certainly helps if senior managers are well informed about child protection issues and are appointed a senior adviser who bears the responsibility for child protection issues in peacekeeping or peacebuilding missions.⁸¹¹ Pressure to ensure child protection must be maintained at all levels (local, regional international) and checks and balances must be enforced to ensure these standards are adhered to and have the intended impact in post-conflict scenarios.

DDR programmes will undoubtedly continue to be implemented as a necessary component of post-conflict peacebuilding. However, only time will tell if the lessons, best practices and guidance articulated in the IDDRS will be implemented in future DDR programmes, whether they will have the intended impacts or whether the rhetoric contained in reports will be translated into concrete action.

Perspective

History will determine what the legacy of Liberia's Child DDR programme is. Some say such prognosis cannot be made before ten years lapse allowing for reforms to take effect.⁸¹² If that is true, given that Liberia's DDR programme officially ended in July 2009, we have some time to wait to see whether yesterday's child soldiers will not be tomorrow's rebels. Comparing preliminary information, in 2010, we are able to see that Liberia has made

⁸¹¹ Interview 96.

⁸¹² This claim of ten years was made in Julia Buxton, *Reintegration and Long-Term Development: Linkages and Challenges* (Bradford: Centre for International Cooperation and Security, University of Bradford, 2008).

remarkable political, economic and social progress in part due to the adult and child DDR programme's contribution to the country's peacebuilding. Liberia still faces many problems and challenges, but due to the considerable support of the UN, multilateral financial institutions (i.e., the World Bank), bilateral donors and the increasing role of the private sector, the situation looks more hopeful than it did a few years ago.

Politically, anti-corruption efforts and transparency of government finances have remained a priority of President Johnson-Sirleaf's administration. Although progress has been made, the daunting task of strengthening government institutions and capacities continues. The country is gearing up to hold its second post-war multiparty elections in 2011, where President Johnson-Sirleaf is seeking re-election. Although the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has published its final report, the messages are mixed as the implementations of its recommendations have been slow. Some of the recommendations are unlikely to be implemented. – it recommended, for instance, that many of the key political actors, including President Johnson-Sirleaf, be prohibited from seeking public office.

Liberia's economy is being successfully revitalized. Since the end of the war, Liberia's economy consistently improved with steady rises in its GDP: 7.8% in 2006, 9.4% in 2007, 8.3% in 2008 with projections of 6% for 2009 and 5.5% in 2010.⁸¹³ As a result of an ambitious reform agenda and sustained implementation of strong macro-economic policies, Liberia had \$4.5 billion of its debt written off by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in June 2010.⁸¹⁴ Domestic resource mobilisation has dramatically increased to \$235 million in 2008/9 providing government with much needed resources to finance government budgets and services.⁸¹⁵ Better management of Liberia's natural resources, improved government administration (such as tax collection) and increased foreign direct investment are main contributing factors to these improvements. However, despite these notable improvements to economic indicators, unemployment is stubbornly high and job creation remains a top priority of the government.⁸¹⁶ Through concerted policy reforms and as a result of improved security enabled President Johnson-Sirleaf has been successful in instilling and returning confidence to Liberia on the international scene. As a result of this, Liberia is no longer a pariah on the international economic or foreign policy stage.

⁸¹³ International Monetary Fund, *Liberia: Poverty Reduction Strategy - Progress Report* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, October 2010), 11.

⁸¹⁴ John Lipsky, "Liberia: Life after Debt", International Monetary Fund <http://www.imf.org/external/np/speeches/2010/063010.htm> (3 October 2010).

⁸¹⁵ International Monetary Fund, 11.

⁸¹⁶ Interview 99.

A country that only a decade ago was considered a 'basket-case' is today being considered an exemplar country transitioning from conflict.⁸¹⁷ However, in spite of its laudable successes and progress, the security situation remains fragile. Liberia's security apparatus does not yet have the capacity to respond independent of UNMIL.⁸¹⁸ This is a serious concern, as UNMIL's budget for 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 is set at \$524 million, which is unsustainably high.⁸¹⁹ UNMIL is under pressure from UN headquarters to downsize and develop its exit strategy. Once certain benchmarks are met UNMIL will start drawing down its forces and reducing its presence in the country. Moreover, the current trends and unrest in Cote d'Ivoire as a result of their first elections in over a decade are reason for concern – there have been reports of significant refugee flows into Liberia, but also the recruitment of Liberian fighters. There are reports that Liberian mercenaries, presumably ex-combatants, are supporting the internationally recognised loser of the election, Laurent Gbagbo's efforts to remain in power.⁸²⁰

Although there are causes for concern and constant threats to progress, these improvements show the general positive trends in Liberia's affairs. It is hard, if not impossible, to think any of these improvements would have been possible without the combatants agreeing to a ceasefire, participating in the adult and child DDR process, and refraining from mobilizing themselves to pursue their interests enabling all the subsequent peacebuilding efforts to proceed.

Acknowledging the difficulties in peacebuilding and specifically both adult and child DDR, further research into more specific areas is merited. This study sought to assess the centrality of child DDR on peacebuilding in Liberia, and although its lessons may be applicable to other countries, they are not conclusive and are merely indicative for future research agendas. Naturally, given the breadth of peacebuilding, the possibilities of further research are extensive and would help address the imbalances in the academic literature on peacebuilding more generally, children and war and child soldiers more specifically.

⁸¹⁷ Lipsky.

⁸¹⁸ United Nations, "Twenty-First Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia," (11 August 2010), 16.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ BBC News, "Ivory Coast Clashes Kill 173, Says UN" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12067318> (24 December 2010).

Among the multitude of issues worth exploring are the political and financial implications of child DDR, including the long-term implications of participating in such programmes. Much of the research about DDR focuses on short- or medium-term goals, and although it would be burdensome to gather such information and analysis, better understanding the long-term benefits and impacts of DDR, and specifically child DDR, at an individual level could invaluablely contribute to improving programmatic design to better suit the ex-combatants and their community's needs. Although this thesis attempted to articulate some of the linkages and interactions between adult and child DDR programmes, an in-depth assessment could further benefit these important issues. Moreover, girl child soldiers warrant much more attention in research than they receive. Girls are said to be a particular challenge in the implementation of DDR programmes and further studies on how to improve girls' participation as well as maximize the benefits of their involvement in DDR programmes would go far to filling this gap. As the field of child soldiers has progressed rapidly in a relatively short amount of time, it is clear that the potential for future research to impact the design, policy framework and the lives of child soldiers is great.

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- A. Humanitarian Action Committee Meeting, Monrovia 03/03/05
- B. Security Briefing 22/03/05
- C. Humanitarian Action Committee Meeting 22/03/05
- D. Humanitarian Coordination Meeting, Margibi County 24/03/05
- E. Humanitarian Action Committee Meeting, Monrovia 29/03/05
- F. Working Group Meeting at Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie – April 2005
- G. Working Group Meeting at Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie – April 2005
- H. Protection Core Group, Monrovia 12/04/05
- I. Working Group Meeting at Guthrie Rubber Plantation (meeting with Civil Society and village elders), Guthrie – April 2005
- J. Protection Core Group, Monrovia 14/04/05
- K. NGO Monitor Steering Group Meeting, Monrovia 15/04/05
- L. Working Group Meeting at Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie – April 2005
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- O. Security Briefing, Monrovia 24/05/05
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- Q. Security Briefing, Monrovia 07/06/05
- R. Working Group Meeting at Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie – June 2005
- S. Security Sector Reform National Dialogue, Monrovia 03-04/08/05

Focus Groups:

- I. A Mixed civilian and ex-combatant group (total approximately 40 men, women and children), Gbanga – July 2005
- II. A mixed Group of Community Elders, Leaders, teachers, and ex-combatant including child ex-combatant, Gbanga – July 2005
- III. A group of four (2 boys and 2 girls) child ex-combatants at Children's Assistance Programme (CAP), Monrovia – August 2005

Interviews Conducted

- 1. Former Child Soldier, Respondent A, Monrovia – February 2005
- 2. Former Child Soldier, Respondent B, Monrovia - February 2005
- 3. Ryan Nichols, UNDP, Reintegration Expert, Monrovia – February 2005
- 4. John Juech, UNMIL, Civil Affairs Officer, Monrovia – March 2005
- 5. Former Child Soldier, Respondent C, Monrovia – March 2005
- 6. Former Child Soldier, Respondent E, Monrovia – April 2005
- 7. Former Child Soldier, Respondent F, Monrovia – April 2005
- 8. Former Child Soldier, Respondent G, Monrovia – April 2005
- 9. Former Child Soldier, Respondent D, Monrovia – April 2005

10. Tammi Sharpe, UNMIL, Reintegration Officer, Monrovia and Robertsport – April 2005
11. Former Child Soldier, Respondent H, Gbapolu – May 2005
12. Former Child Soldier, Respondent I, Gbapolu – May 2005
13. Former Child Soldier, Respondent J, Gbapolu – May 2005
14. Former Child Soldier, Respondent K, Gbapolu – May 2005
15. Former Child Soldier, Respondent L, Gbapolu – May 2005
16. Sylvia Bisanz, UNMIL, International Police Service and member of the Child Task Force, Monrovia – May 2005
17. Dennis Johnson, UNMIL, Head of Humanitarian Coordination Section, Monrovia – May 2005
18. Nicky Smith, International Rescue Committee, Head of Office, Monrovia – May 2005
19. Mike McGovern, International Crisis Group, Africa Director, Monrovia – May 2005
20. Fatuma Ibrahim, UNICEF, Senior Child Protection Officer – May 2005
21. Damien Callamand, UN Security Council Panel of Experts – May 2005
22. Josephine Guerrero, UNMIL Public Information, Communications Officer, Gbanga – May 2005
23. Selaisse Atadika, UNDP Reintegration Officer (and former UNICEF Consultant), Monrovia – May 2005
24. Carmen Lopez-Clavero, International Rescue Committee, Country Head, Monrovia – May 2005
25. Art Blundell, UN Security Council Panel of Experts, Chair – May 2005
26. John Juech, UNMIL, Civil Affairs Officer, Gbapolu – May 2005
27. Christian Højbjerg, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Denmark), Professor, Monrovia – May 2005
28. Tammi Sharpe, UNMIL Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery Section (RRR), Reintegration Officer, Monrovia – May 2005
29. Lanre Shasore, UNMIL Political Policy and Planning Office, Policy Expert, Monrovia – May 2005
30. Jeremy Farrall, UNMIL Political Policy and Planning Office, Advisor, Monrovia – May 2005
31. Former Child Soldier, Respondent M, Monrovia - June 2005
32. Former Child Soldier, Respondent N, Monrovia - June 2005
33. Pradeep Lama, UNMIL DDR Section, former Head of Camp Management, Monrovia – June 2005
34. Wayne Bleier, Christian Children's Fund (CCF), Head, Monrovia – June 2005
35. Rosemary Musumba, UNMIL Humanitarian Coordination Section, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Monrovia – June 2005
36. Maurice, UNMIL Joint Mission Analysis Cell, French Intelligence Officer, Monrovia – June 2005
37. Gloria Ntegeye, UNMIL Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery Section (RRR), Reporting Officer, Monrovia – June 2005
38. Thomas Paquette, UNMIL Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery Section (RRR), Chief, Monrovia – June 2005
39. General Muhammad Tahir, UNMIL, Deputy Force Commander, Monrovia – August 2005
40. Jean Michel, UNMIL Joint Mission Analysis Cell, Monrovia – June 2006
41. Frances Naiga Muwonge, UNMIL, Electoral Officer, Monrovia – June 2005
42. Franklyn Henries, UNMIL Humanitarian Coordination Section, Logistics/NGO Liaison, Monrovia – June 2005

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44. Lanre Shasore, UNMIL Political Policy and Planning Office, Policy Expert, Monrovia – June 2005
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71. Art Blundell, UN Security Council Panel of Experts, Chair – August 2005
72. Patrick Cooker, UNMIL, Civil Affairs Officer, Monrovia – August 2005
73. Captain Ramy, UNMIL MILOBS, Monrovia – August 2005
74. Salvator Nkurunzia, UNDP, Reintegration Officer, Monrovia – August 2005
75. Tracey Hebert, USAID, Reintegration Officer, Monrovia – August 2005
76. Angela Kerny, UNICEF, Country Director, Monrovia – August 2005
77. Aine Bhreathnach, Oxfam, Protection Advisor – April 2005
78. Hiruit Tefferi, UNICEF, Consultant, Monrovia – August 2005
79. Professor Eboe Hutchful, African Security Network and Wayne State University (USA), Monrovia – August 2005
80. Joe Wylie, NTGL, Deputy-Defence Minister, Monrovia – August 2005
81. Purusi Sadiki, UNMIL, Child Protection Advisor, Monrovia – August 2005
82. Erin McCandless, UNMIL, Civil Affairs Officer, Monrovia – August 2005
83. Charles Achoda, JIU, Head, Monrovia – August 2005
84. Clive Jachnik, UNMIL, former head DDR Section – September 2005
85. Alec Wargo, UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Programme Officer, New York – September 2005

86. Tonderai Chikuhwa, UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Programme Officer, New York – September 2005
87. Manuel Fontaine, UNICEF, Policy Advisor, New York – September 2005
88. Rebecca Symington, UNICEF, Senior Child Protection Officer, New York – September 2005
89. Lamin Sise, United Nations, Director for Legal Affairs and Human Rights in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, New York – September 2005
90. Jacques Klein, UNMIL, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Princeton – September 2005
91. Professor Lamin Waristay, Government of Liberia, Advisor to the Liberian Chairman on Communications, New York – September 2005
92. Former Child Soldier, Respondent Z, Monrovia – April 2006
93. Former Child Soldier, Respondent AA, Monrovia – April 2006
94. Former Child Soldier, Respondent BB, Monrovia – April 2006
95. Former Child Soldier, Respondent CC, Monrovia – April 2006
96. Purusi Sadiki, UNMIL, Child Protection Advisor, London – June 2006
97. Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Programme Officer, New York – August 2006
98. Erin McCandless, UNMIL Office of the Deputy-SRSG, Policy Advisor, telephone interview – June 2007
99. Richard Tolbert, Chairman of the Liberian National Investment Committee and Advisor to the President, Wilton Park – February 2010
100. Patrick Hayford, United Nations, Director of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Toronto – May 2010
101. Ibrahim Sesay, UNICEF Liberia, Child Protection Officer, telephone/email interview – July 2010
102. Miatta Abdulai-Clark, UNICEF Liberia, Child Protection Officer, telephone/email interview – September through December 2010
103. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Geneva – October 2010
104. Lamin Sise, former Director for Legal Affairs and Human Rights in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General at the United Nations, Geneva – February 2011

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